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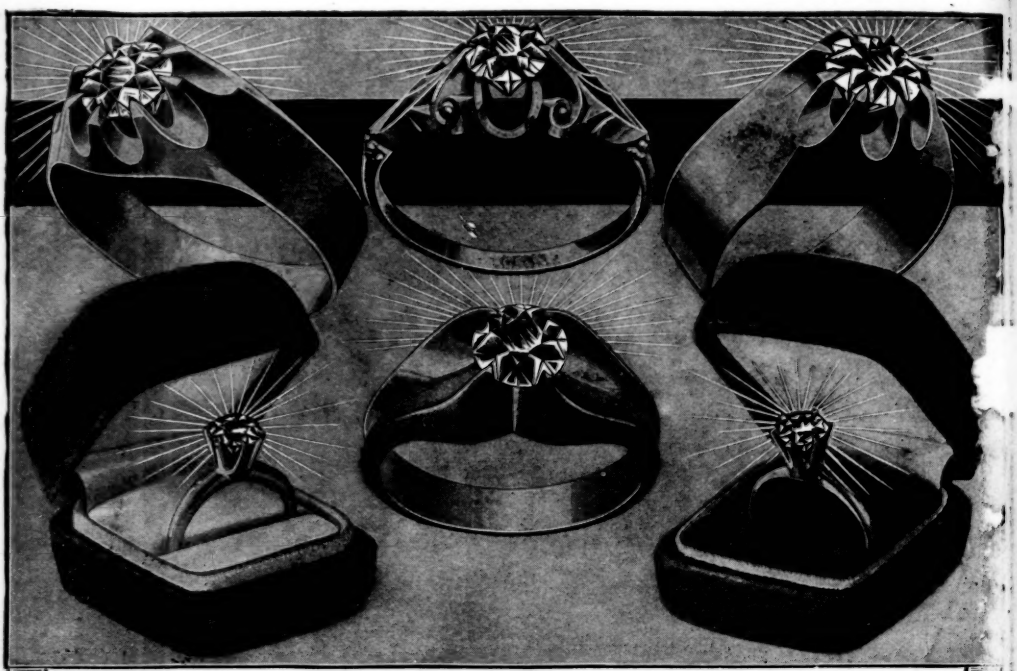

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The Black Cat

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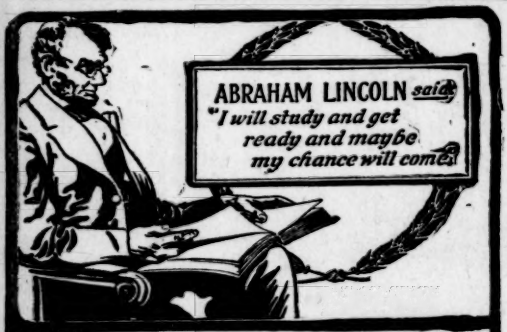

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The Black Cat

Honorably Discharged

BY HAPSBURG LIEBE

An American soldier in the Philippines, with racial hatred prompting him, refuses to salute a negro officer and is dishonorably discharged from the army. He plans revenge, but weakens when his chance comes.

IT was hot, insufferably hot, there in San Fernando de la Union that afternoon. The palm fronds were as still as though they were marble; the flowers and the grass were dusty and wilted. The narrow streets were deserted save for a perspiring American patrol, and now and then, a prowling dog too utterly thin to furnish a family of Igorots with a half-decent meal. The Filipinos were taking their siestas on the bamboo floors of their houses; most of the two companies of the black Forty-eighth were laughing and singing and throwing dice in the shade of the fragrant ylang-ylangs; most of the third battalion of the white ——th were lounging, stripped of their blue shirts, about the old Spanish Government building which served them as quarters.

Private Dunwoody, Tennessee mountaineer, lay on his back on his cot. One hand held a wide blue handkerchief ready to mop his face; the other held a manual of arms before his keen, dark eyes—Dunwoody did want to be a good soldier. He had to spell his way through the little book, being almost entirely without education.

First Sergeant Bell walked to Dunwoody's cot. He stood looking down upon the lanky hill man with a mixture of sympathy and something else on his countenance. Dunwoody knew he was there, but he didn't seem to care anything about it. For to Dunwoody a man was a man, no more, no less; V-shaped sleeve chevrons—even shoulder straps, for that matter—counted for very little indeed, with Dunwoody.

"I'm afraid you've got yourself into a little trouble, Dun," Bell finally said. "You refused to salute a black lieutenant this morning, didn't you?"

Dunwoody's lean cheeks flared a proud and angry red. His eyes glittered and his thin, sensitive lips quivered. He flung the manual of arms to the floor and got quickly to his feet. The non-commissioned officer backed instinctively from the half-wild, uncouth, honest man from Tennessee's hills.

"I shore did refuse!" Dunwoody snapped hotly. "I more 'n refused to s'lute him; I told him that if my hand

ever went up to him, it would knock every speck o' life outen him. And I meant it! What did he say about it, anyhow?"

"He didn't say anything. He didn't even report it. Major Lipsworthy saw it all; he told the captain to speak to you; the captain has sent me to tell you to come to his quarters. Now keep your head. Don't get mad, for heaven's sake! You've been a good soldier, a fine soldier. I want to keep you. Get ready now and go to Captain Blair."

Dunwoody went pale. He stared at Sergeant Bell and was silent. Bell continued easily, "It's not the man you're supposed to salute, it's the position he holds, the uniform he wears."

"Saw it right off where you're at!" clipped Dunwoody. "If they want the uniform s'luted, let 'em take it off and hang it on a bush and I'll stand at 'tension and s'lute it until I'm as green as hell in the face, sir! All right, I'll go down to the cap'n's shack and I'll tell the cap'n—and Major Lipsworthy, too, if he happens to be thar—the same as I've told you!"

Bell shook his head gloomily and walked away. Dunwoody slipped his blue shirt on, tightened his belt a notch more than he usually wore it, and went down to the Calle de la Concepcion, San Fernando's principal street.

Captain Blair's quarters were in a high-floored house of nipa and bamboo and hewn mahogany. Dunwoody climbed the ladder-like steps with a quick, nervous tread, entered by the low doorway and stood at attention. Captain Blair sealed an envelope, addressed it, threw it into a box and half turned in his folding campchair. He began to caress his brow with the air of a person who finds himself in a quandary.

"Did you want me?" asked the mountaineer.

His speech was stinging. The commander of company L took his hand from his brow and looked seriously toward Dunwoody.

"Yes, sir," said he, "I wanted you. I'm going to put it plainly, without frills or garnishment: you will have to salute all commissioned officers, black or white. You're in the army and you'll have to abide by the rules and regulations of the army. In saluting a negro officer, you are saluting his position, his uniform, and not the man himself."

Dunwoody went almost pallid. He raised his head a little higher.

"I won't do it," he declared in a low, bitter, determined voice. "I never will do it. I'd die first. I'd be burnt alive first. Thar hain't enough power on earth, in heaven nor in hell, to make me do it. And a man as *would* do it, sir, hain't got as much principle in him as a yaller dawg—which applies to you, Cap'n Blair, if you want to take it thataway!"

Captain Blair rose. He was astounded; for him, a commissioned officer, to be thus spoken to by a private soldier was an unheard-of thing! He stepped quickly toward Dunwoody—and Dunwoody, blind with rage, forgetting all that which he should have remembered, muttered a blood-red oath and knocked him down!

Captain Blair rose dazedly. His mouth and the back of his head were

bleeding. He fingered the butt of his revolver as though half minded to use the weapon upon the man who had so savagely attacked him. Dunwoody stood silent and menacing, his fists clenched hard, his eyes shining and black.

Then there was a grave voice from the doorway: "An act which merits death, or such other punishment as a courtmartial may direct."

It was Major Lipsworthy—stern, a strict disciplinarian, all of a soldier and nothing more or less. He bellowed for the corporal of the guard. He approached Captain Blair.

"Go to the hospital, Captain Blair," he ordered gruffly. He looked toward Dunwoody. "Stand where you are. You're under arrest."

The captain climbed down the steps and went down the street. When he had gone, the negro lieutenant whom Dunwoody had refused to salute, entered. He walked up to the major, raised his right hand respectfully to his hat and said jerkily:

"Major, sir, I wish to say that I have no charges to prefer against this man. I am from the South, and I understand it all, sir. These may not be the words of an officer, sir, but they are the words of a man who tries to be white under his black hide."

Major Lipsworthy frowned and began to twist at his upturned, iron-gray mustaches. Dunwoody stared at the negro as though he could not believe that which his own ears had heard. Then he spoke to the black lieutenant.

"You," he said, "you're a lot whiter than this here *thing* as calls hisself commander o' the—"

"Hush!" roared Major Lipsworthy.

The corporal of the guard ran up the steps, took charge of Dunwoody, and led him to a cell in the old Spanish prison, which stood not far from Dunwoody's former quarters.

Time dragged like an eternity to the mountaineer behind the bars of iron and the thick, strong walls of mildewed stone. No fate worse than imprisonment may come to the hill man. Dunwoody was silent, sullen, morose; there were few of those who held guard over him who did not feel in some unaccountable way afraid of him. Being primitive, a man whose religion was to believe in the doctrines of a square deal and an eye for an eye, of course Dunwoody planned vengeance—he planned it during the hot hours of the day and during the still watches of the night. If he were to be disgraced, then he would be fully, entirely, completely disgraced. No halfway doings for him!

When the day of the courtmartial came, Dunwoody's expectations were realized. He was given the army's yellow brand, a dishonorable discharge, which disfranchised him at home and made him less than a nobody. As he walked out of the vicinity of his former quarters, with his head held proudly and his eyes filled with fire, he knew that many were watching him go. And here Dunwoody made the most serious mistake of his life, perhaps. He thought he was the object of contempt, when he was really the object of much sincere sympathy. He was as desperate as a man may become.

Now, the mountaineer, Dunwoody, like a great many other and better

educated American soldiers, was not without his sweetheart among the natives. Her name was Andrea Borja; she was half Spanish, and very pretty and charming in her way—a sort of brown Venus, she was. For him she had played the guitar and sung quaint songs in minors, a thousand times; a thousand times had she made and lighted cigarettes, and cooked *arroz* for him. Being, as he thought, utterly friendless among those of his own race, it was but natural for Dunwoody to turn to Andrea for comfort, for food, for songs and for cigarettes. So he slowly wended his way through the gathering twilight shades toward the thatched house in which Andrea lived with her mother and a man whom she called her father because he happened to be her mother's husband.

Old Minia met him at the foot of the ladder, spat betel, and wrung his hand warmly. Dunwoody thrilled at the friendly touch.

"Where will I find the Senorita Andrea?" he whispered in Spanish. There were those there in San Fernando who had said more than once that Dunwoody could speak Spanish far better than he could speak English.

Minia spat betel again, turned, and pointed a lean forefinger toward the doorway above. Dunwoody climbed the ladder silently and entered the half dark room. He found Andrea sitting cross-legged on the slatted floor, combing her long black hair.

"Carissima!" said he, eagerly.

Andrea looked around, recognized the mountaineer, and sprang to her feet. That same moment saw her arms go about his sun-burned neck, saw his arms close about her bare, well-shaped shoulders. Then Andrea led him to a seat beside a window, and they sat down.

"That accursed prison!" muttered Andrea. "But now you are free—*Maria mia,* and I am glad! I tried to see you, *carissimo,* but they would not let me pass. I tried to take you food and cigarettes. They would not let me pass. There is *anisada* here; will you drink?"

Dunwoody said in two languages that he would.

Andrea rose, found a match and lighted a cocoanut-oil lamp; then she brought her American sweetheart a bottle almost full. Dunwoody drank deeply and passed the bottle back. Andrea gave him a lighted cigarette and dropped to the seat very close to him. He put an arm about her waist, and she smiled happily up into his eyes.

"I have been thrown out of the army, like a dog," he told her.

"No!" cried Andrea.

"Yes!" declared Dunwoody. "It is so. I can never go back home now. I am disgraced among all Americans, forever disgraced. It was not right, *chiquitica!* There is but one thing left to me, and that is vengeance. *And I will have vengeance!"*

The liquor which he had drunk was beginning to magnify things. He looked down into Andrea's now sober eyes and smiled for the first time in months. He tightened his arm about her—he was the drowning man, and she was the straw, one may say. A tear rolled down his cheek; Andrea wiped it away tenderly with a Chino-silk handkerchief and kissed him.

Again did Dunwoody tighten his sinewy arm about her. Again did she kiss him.

"If I cannot go back home," he said, a trifle thickly, "I must stay here. I don't want to stay here alone, Andrea; it is not the usual thing, but—I want to marry you."

"It is the *anisada* talking now!" said Andrea.

"No!" and Dunwoody shook his head. "How could I stay here alone, Andrea?"

Andrea's dark face took on a look of supreme happiness. She rose, put a thin Chino-silk mantilla about her shoulders and took Dunwoody by the arm.

"Let us go to the *padre,*" she smiled.

Dunwoody went to his feet. He staggered a little. He allowed Andrea to lead him to the *padre,* who married them and gave them his blessing.

They hurried back to the bamboo and nipa hut that Dunwoody now thought of as home. They had barely seated themselves beside the window, when old Benito Borja entered. He walked silently across the little room, stopped, and stood looking with searching eyes down upon the mountaineer's flushed face.

"Señor," he said in a low, grave voice, "I know everything. I heard all you said to Andrea, my daughter, now your wife. I ask you, señor, did you mean that which you said of vengeance?"

Dunwoody rose. He seemed very tall standing there before the slim little Ilocano. He shot his jaw out and took old Benito by both snoulders in a grip of iron. "I mean it," he growled.

"Then you may have your vengeance very easily," smiled Benito. "Come with me, señor. Don't speak; don't make a noise. All will be plain to you later."

Benito gave to Andrea a glance full of meaning. Andrea stepped to Dunwoody and said to him sweetly:

"Go, husband! I will go with you."

The three of them stole out of the hut and through the outskirts of the town. Benito, shrewd, cunning, led the way unerringly, even when they entered the hill country that lay to the east and to the north; not once did he pause, not once did he appear to be in doubt concerning direction. Dunwoody followed him closely, almost eagerly; and close behind Dunwoody walked the graceful brown Venus who called him her husband.

When they had covered some four miles since leaving the outer reaches of San Fernando, a thin Ilocano voice cried out sharply the challenge:

"Alto! Quien pasa?"

The trio halted. The leader answered in muffled tones:

"'Sta bien, Gregorio. It is Captain Benito Borja and two friends—and one of them is an American."

"Pasa," said the man of the insurgent outpost.

Borja turned to Dunwoody. "Come," he invited.

The three passed a little knot of brown men in ragged, dirty-white uniforms, and entered a winding carabao path that led through a thicket of bamboos and into a grassy valley. In this valley there was a campfire,

and sitting about it Dunwoody saw five serious-looking Filipinos with crude epaulets on their shoulders and long Spanish sabres at their sides. Beyond them, a brown horde lay at rest.

Dunwoody, who had been the finest marksman in his regiment, had done some scouting. He had seen the much-wanted and notorious rebel, Beltran Angga, who was but little behind Emilio Aguinaldo and Luk Ban in generalship and in shrewdness. Among the five men gathered about the fire, Dunwoody recognized Beltran Angga!

The Filipinos rose and began to stare hard toward the mountaineer. Borja raised his hand.

"Hold, friends!" he said. "Do this man no harm. He is with us. I will explain, General Angga."

He explained. The five officials shook hands with Dunwoody in true American fashion. Then the eight sat down, and Beltran Angga proposed to give Dunwoody a major's place.

"No," objected the mountaineer. "I don't want to ally myself with your army. What I want is vengeance. I want command of all these forces for one day, and that day is tomorrow. Give me that, and I'll make a master stroke for both you and myself."

"What are your plans, señor?" inquired the careful Beltran Angga, passing a handful of native cigarettes.

Dunwoody took a cigarette and lighted it from a brand that Andrea had taken from the fire.

"I've planned for months," he said slowly, his native drawl creeping into his Spanish. "Early in the morning I'll send a message to Major Lipsworthy. That message will tell him that a big force is coming up the coast to attack the town. He'll take his six hundred men and start down the coast to surprise the enemy, of course. While he's gone, I'll lead your forces into San Fernando and hide them in the upper stories of the buildings. When the Americans return, we'll kill them all—we'll have cover and every advantage—"

"I see," smiled Angga. "It should work out well. It is a great idea, Señor. But it is hard for me to believe that you are in earnest, señor. Can you convince me?"

Dunwoody puffed hard at his cigarette before he answered.

"Suppose you stay at my side when I lead your forces into San Fernando, and at the first sign of treachery on my part, shoot me. What do you think of that?"

"My men are from this moment until sunset tomorrow, in your hands, señor," declared Beltran Angga. "You are unarmed. What weapons do you wish?"

Dunwoody's eyes glinted triumphantly. "I want a Krag rifle; one I'm used to," he said. And he got it.

He withdrew from the fire and lay down on the grass, that he might sleep. Andrea, whom he had for the moment forgotten, followed him, sat down, and took his head in her lap. She began to caress his hair and to croon tenderly in her outlandish native dialect; but he was thinking, and he paid no attention to her—had her words been Spanish instead of Ilocano, he would not have heard what she said.

For vengeance was in his hands—a

great vengeance, a blood-red vengeance. Oh, he would make them sorry: the officers for their trying and condemning him; the enlisted men for their looks of contempt. It was all upon their own heads. He had tried and tried hard, to be a worthy soldier. They wouldn't let him. Very well, then, he would be something else.

He wished that he had just one little swallow of *anisada*. He went to sleep wishing that, and dreamed of seeing half-starved Igorot dogs gnawing the severed head of Major Lipsworthy.

He awoke at dawn. His head still lay in Andrea's lap; Andrea's head lay on his breast; she was sleeping peacefully. He took her by a bare shoulder and shook her gently. She sat up and smiled down upon him; then she kissed him. He rose and took up the Krag and the belt of cartridges the insurgent commander had given him. There was something magnificent in the feel of a rifle in his two strong hands.

"*Chiquito!*" murmured Andrea, very proudly.

"*Chiquitica!*" smiled Dunwoody.

Beltran Angga walked up. In his right hand he carried a stub-nosed, blue automatic pistol. He exhibited it threateningly.

"At the first show of treachery, Señor," he frowned—"this!"

"My bargain," replied Dunwoody. "Let us get ready. We will march to a point behind the hills that overlook San Fernando. The army will wait there, and you and I and my wife, will steal to the brow of the hill nearest the town. I will write the message there and Andrea will take it to the American commander; I would trust no one to hurt her; besides, she can tell a good story about my being wounded and at her house down the coast. You understand? When we see the Americans leave to the southward, we will fall back to our forces and march them through the gap in the hills and take possession of San Fernando."

"I understand," replied Beltran Angga, pleasedly.

The march was on almost before sunrise. At the head of the long, ragged, dirty-white column, walked Angga, Dunwoody, and Andrea; and Angga kept his automatic pistol ready to use at any moment.

Some little time later, the latter-named three persons crept to a point from which they could look down upon San Fernando. The mountaineer parted the bushes before him and bent forward. The sight of Old Glory floating in the fresh morning breeze made him go white. He stared silently, strangely fascinated, at the banner that meant so much to so many people. But it was no longer his flag, and why should he feel as he felt now? In spite of himself, he felt a great and utter sense of loneliness and of loss, and a mist came to his eyes. That he might be strengthened, he drew from his blouse pocket, his dishonorable discharge and looked at it—the yellow disgrace.

A gentle hand was placed on his elbow. A gentle voice whispered at his ear:

"What is the matter, husband?"

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 50]

The Flag of His Fathers

BY ARTHUR R. ANDRE

An aeroplane rushes a blasé young millionaire into the service of his country and when the test came, blood told as it always will.

MORTIMER Wayne was in no hurry as he strolled along the tropical coast-line. From time to time he paused to admire the scene, and from time to time he glanced at the newspaper which he held in his hand. War had been declared, he discovered, but the news caused him no uneasiness. The Mexicans were expected to attack Tampico, he learned, but that troubled him still less. Then on an inside page, in smaller type, he read: "Decadent Scion of 'Fighting Waynes, Deserts Fiancée." The young millionaire read the article through with flushed cheeks. He was used to being abused by the press because he chose to go where he pleased, and spend his money as he pleased, rather than work to death striving to pile up more; but this dragging in of the name of Mary McCullough touched him on the raw, and with an oath he tossed the offending sheet into the sea. The next moment he almost stumbled over an aeroplane which blocked his path, and which had been hidden from view by a clump of bushes that grew close to the water's edge.

There was a man and a corpse in the machine, he noted with a start of surprise. The man had been shot from behind; for a tiny stream of blood still oozed from the wound in his breast; and Wayne marveled that he hadn't heard the shooting. The other aviator, he observed, in the same astonished glance, was his friend and schoolmate, Archie Banks.

"Lift Stiles out of the machine," commanded the dead man's companion.

The smile of recognition died on the newcomer's lips. He was not used to taking orders from any one, and the tone of authority in his friend's voice grated on his ear. Then he perceived that the other had a gun in his hand. Banks was lying back in his seat as if tired, and the hand that held the gun rested carelessly on the side of the machine, but the muzzle of the weapon pointed straight at Wayne. "Step lively!" exclaimed the aviator, repeating the command; and with a very bad grace indeed, Wayne complied.

"Now unfasten the dispatch-bag and strap it on yourself."

Wayne looked up with a frown, but the other urged him on at the point of the gun. "No time to explain now," he said irritably. "Climb aboard and pull that lever." Mortimer Wayne obeyed. He had never ridden in an aeroplane before, and he badly wanted to voice the fact as he took his seat, but pride held the words back. Like a man in a dream, he pulled the lever as directed,

and immediately the machine soared smoothly above the tops of the trees.

It was quite safe, he discovered, with a feeling of relief; and for a fleeting moment he caught sight of his yacht, lying in the offing. He wondered what his guests would have to say about his sudden disappearance. He had left the Narcissus that morning for a brief walk—just to stretch his legs before breakfast—but now there was no knowing when he would be back; and a vision of the yacht's cozy cabin and his vacant seat at the head of the table rose in his mind.

"Might I inquire where we are going, and what this is all about?" he asked stiffly.

"Good heavens, man!" cried Banks. "Don't you ever read the papers?"

Mortimer Wayne reddened again. Could it be possible that Archie had also seen the article in the St. Louis newspaper? He knew that his friend was head over heels in love with Mary McCullough. Then he recalled to mind the big black headlines on the front page, and began to understand.

"We located the Mexicans fifty miles from here," Banks broke in upon his thoughts. "We found out all we wanted to know—the information is in that dispatch-bag, remember—and we were just congratulating ourselves upon getting clear away when we 'planed right over one of their outposts." A spasm of pain distorted the speaker's face, but it was gone before his friend could see it. "Steer a little bit lower, Mort," he said.

Wayne brought the flyer down nearer the ground and meditated upon what Banks had said to him. Personally, he didn't care who owned Mexico; the war between the United States and Mexico was nothing to him. He supposed that the other aviator was steering when the Mexicans shot him, and that was why they had volplaned to the ground. But why didn't Archie change places with the man and go on again? The young millionaire turned and stared at his friend. Banks had grown very pale in the last five minutes. He still lay back in his seat in an attitude of rest, save for his legs, which swayed rhythmically to the motion of the machine.

"The Mexicans got us both," he said, smiling wanly. "And I think my back is broken."

Wayne cursed softly under his breath. Why couldn't Archie have stayed in St. Louis and gone on tinkering with his confounded machines? There were any number of competent airmen in the States, ready and willing to go to the front. Patriotism made him weary—and he settled down gloomily to the task of steering the flyer. Rivers, forests, and plains, swept endlessly beneath their feet. Lonely haciendas and herds of grazing cattle were glimpsed at intervals, and left behind; and once they beheld the buildings of a big city against a range of hills. Then a strip of beach flashed into view. Air-surf buffeted the machine, and Wayne made the discovery that it balanced itself.

"You don't need to hold the levers," Banks observed, as they sailed out over the sea. "Just set them for where you want to go. You couldn't upset this monoplane if you wanted to. It's my latest, Mort," he added,

with a touch of pride. "And I'm afraid it's my last."

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Wayne.

"Steer north, Mort," the other went on again in a tired voice. "You can't miss the camp for the coastline is low, and you can see the flag on the 'wireless' from a long distance off. I couldn't reach the levers after the Mexicans plugged us," he explained, speaking with an effort. "Stiles volplaned across the river before he died; then you happened along. Sail low, Mort," he advised, a minute later; "and don't increase your speed, for there is barely enough 'gas' in the tank to make the trip."

Wayne swung the nose of the flyer round to the north and gazed ahead. There was a tiny speck in the distance, which might be the "wireless"; but the next moment he concluded that it was an island, for he caught the glint of waves on the far side of it. All around him now was the open sea. The long Gulf rollers rose and fell; and the shadow of the machine coasted over them like a big bird. Then Archie spoke again:

"If you get through with the dispatches," he said, faintly, "remember me to Mary McCullough."

Wayne replied cheerfully that he would and gazed ahead again. As soon as he reached the camp, he determined he would wire New York for specialists to patch up Archie's spine. Then he would send for Mary McCullough to nurse his friend back to health, and in the end, Mary would fall in love with her devoted patient and marry him. Wayne smiled to himself as he pieced together this little romance. He liked Mary McCullough in a way. It tickled his vanity that the girl wanted to marry him. But he knew in his heart that he wasn't fit to marry her, and that was why he had left her when he did. Suddenly a bullet whined past his ear.

He looked back. Three aeroplanes were in hot pursuit of him and he calculated that they would catch up with him in a short time. Then he gazed ahead again and detected a break in the horizon. A faint, wavering line stretched away to the east and at the north end of it was a hazy, indistinct filament, which he judged to be the "wireless" at the camp. Now that he was discovered, he reflected, it was useless to waste gasoline fighting the air-surf, and he lifted his machine higher as he advanced. A little later he began to wonder why his pursuers failed to overtake him. Then he happened to look down and perceived the reason. The island which he had espied in the distance a little while before was now close at hand. On the north side of it was a little inlet, or harbor, and over the surface of this moved a hydroplane, manned by a Mexican. The next moment, the machine took to the air, leaving behind it a wake like a rising duck.

The man in the hydroplane headed straight toward him, and Wayne knew instantly what he had to expect. The Mexican proposed to ram him; to bring the two flyers together in mid-air, and so bury the dispatches in the sea. Wayne smiled grimly as he watched his assailant approach. He

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When Time Ran Backward

BY HARRY KEELER

Attracted by the alluring label description, "Turns Time Backward," an adventurous young man drinks from a mysterious —— "Jersey Lightning" was well-water compared to his drink—results considered.

IT was a peculiarly shaped bottle made of dark green glass. Its base, round and covered with corrugations, rose to a tapering neck. In appearance it was not unlike what is known as a Venetian flask. Inside was a liquid of the same color, so I discovered later, as absinthe—but not nearly so viscous. A pasteboard tag, tied to the neck, bore the mystifying printed words:

"Turns Time Backward."

I had just moved into my newly rented quarters at the boarding house of Mrs. O'Hara on North State Street. Under ordinary circumstances, I would have become very wroth at finding an article left behind by some former lodger, but in this case I was too perplexed and too full of wonder at these cryptic words to give way to any anger.

My first impulse, of course, was to summon my landlady and give the bottle over into her keeping.

"Turns Time Backward." What on earth did it mean? Was it some kind of a joke?

That the gentleman who had rented the rooms before I moved into them was a peculiar chap, I gathered from one of Mrs. O'Hara's bursts of loquaciousness at the time I paid my first deposit. It seems that in addition to being a student of the occult, he was an ardent collector of strange articles from the Orient.

Again I studied the words on the card, "Turns Time Backward." Was it possible that he could have stumbled upon a secret that would—

I drew the cork and sniffed at the contents. The sweetish odor emanating from the liquid within showed that it could not be wholly unpalatable. Although a teetotaler, I had always gloried in the fact that at some time or other in my life I had at least tasted every fancy and mixed drink known to civilization. Therefore, I reasoned, I ought, at least, to become familiar with some of this "turns-time-backward" wine, now that the opportunity had presented itself.

My eyes roved over the dresser in search of a small glass. Not being a habitual toper, that article was, of course, lacking. My gaze, however, fell upon the large tumbler that usually holds my toothbrush. Good enough. I drew the cork again and filled the glass nearly to the brim.

"No use of being stingy with another man's goods," I remarked genially to myself. "Might as well give Time a good reversal."

Apprehensive of the approaching supper time, I glanced at my watch and found it to be five-thirty, P.M.

Then I downed the tumbler's contents.

Now I feel quite certain that those same contents could never make a world-wide reputation for themselves as a beverage. Yet, on the other hand, they were not half bad, once they were down. They seemed to present a combination of odd flavors such as I had never tasted before.

Nothing unusual occurred, though. I dropped into the easy chair by the window and drummed with my fingers upon the arm pieces, waiting expectantly to see what effects, if any, should be produced.

The only thing noticeable was a sudden surge of heat that seemed to spread instantly to the tips of my fingers and the ends of my toes. These last-named members began to feel as though they were radiating warmth and life through millions of miles of space. I felt slightly weary, and yet a trifle elated. For a few seconds my head swam. Then things cleared up.

With the consciousness that I had hoaxed myself, I gazed out of my window which faced Chicago's great West Side. Then I rubbed my eyes in amazement.

The sun, that not two minutes ago was touching the horizon, had climbed back and now stood several degrees above its former position. Such a thing was unheard of. Then again I rubbed my eyes. It was unbelievable.

Hastily I rose to my feet and seized my hat. I felt that I must get outside at once and join the immense throngs that would be watching this strange phenomenon from every street corner.

Fortunately, I met no one to delay me as I made my way downstairs to the front door. Arriving on the front steps, I stood paralyzed, my mouth wide open.

The mechanics of the universe were running in the wrong direction.

I could see people everywhere calmly walking up or down the street backward, with as much unconcern as though they were doing it in the ordinary way. Street cars, automobiles, grocery wagons—all ran in a direction opposite to that which they normally pursued.

I glanced at my watch again. Its hands pointed to five o'clock. Almost at the same instant, the bells of St. James's church nearby, chimed distinctly five times. I must get down at once to the club on Michigan Avenue, interview Caruthers, my life-long friend and companion, and ascertain the actual cause of this revolutionary state of affairs.

I hurried to the corner. Here I perceived a stout man, grasping a newspaper in his hand, gallop up to a newsboy, taking strange backward jumps not unlike those of a kangaroo. The boy took the paper from him, handed him a cent and then went down the street himself, hoppity-skip, backward.

I mounted a car, taking good care to board one which, although it was headed north, was, in reality, retracing its way south.

As the conductor's broad back loomed up in front of me, I watched him. He suddenly jerked a bell cord. The register, which up to the time had shown a total collection of one hundred fares, dropped suddenly to ninety-nine. Then the blue-coated

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The Face in the Ice

BY FREDERIC SIMPICH

This is a story of the ice-packed wilderness where men stake their lives for gold. A nugget representing a small fortune, brings murder and revenge.

ON his knees by the campfire, Red Olesen fussed with the coffee-pot, which had just tipped over for the second time.

"Hand me two or three of them little rocks there behind you, Dutch," he growled; "this damn pot won't stay balanced."

It was January, and the pine-bordered Okanogan was frozen over, save for yawning air-holes here and there, where dark rapids gurgled. In a narrow gorge leading back from the river, whirling wind eddies had swept a rocky nook bare of snow. Here Red Olesen and Big Dutch—off for a week's hunt from the construction camp at Wahachee dam—were resting for the night.

"Big Dutch," who was Fritz Korg on the payroll, swung heavily about and reached for a few loose stones that lay on the frozen earth. He was a gross, unlovely animal, was Big Dutch; his soiled corduroy coat, his scraggly yellow beard and his crooked, tusklike teeth that showed through it, seemed all the same hue of dirty yellow. He grunted audibly, beastlike, as he stooped over to pick up the stones and tossed them, one at a time, to the man by the fire.

"Throw me a flatter one," commanded Olesen, still seeking to prop up the unstable pot. Again Big Dutch stooped, grunting, and pawed among the scattered stones; finding what seemed a flat one, frozen to the earth, he stood erect and kicked it loose, and with the toe of his heavy laced boot, rolled it over the ground to Olesen.

"That'll hold her," said the man by the fire, as he picked up the flat, oddly-shaped fragment that Big Dutch had kicked loose. Olesen started to shove the thing under the pot, then hesitated, "hefting" it curiously. It seemed strangely heavy for its size.

For twenty years, Red Olesen had alternately worked—and prospected. When he had slaved for months at some grinding task and saved a stake, he would outfit himself and slip off into the hills, seeking always for gold. He had never found it, but half a lifetime of failure had not shaken his faith; some day, he felt, he would strike it rich. So now, with that constant vigilance of those who dwell in mineral lands, to whom all "rock" is the potential habitat of treasure, Red Olesen leaned closer to the fire, peering intently at the object in his hand. For a full minute he scrutinized it.

"It's nothin' but a rock," growled Big Dutch impatiently, "stick it under that pot before it upsets again."

But Red Olesen had laid the thing

on the ground and was drawing his short belt-axe. With one corner of the blade, he struck a sharp blow—then dropped his axe and grabbed frantically, impulsively, as one who clutches at a falling object. For the thing Red Olesen hit had not fractured, nor had there been a metallic ring, as when an axe hits rock; instead, the blow was dull, and where the blade had struck, a yellowish scar glinted in the firelight.

For minutes, Olesen crouched, staring fixedly at the nugget, now clasped tightly in his nervous fingers. His big breast rose and fell, his breath coming in long sighs. Here was gold! The gold he had sought so long—a great, solid chunk of it—a chunk like that he had once seen an Indian bring into Spokane—only larger! "Two thousand dollars, if it's a cent!" he whispered; and not once did he look at Big Dutch, his bunkie these many months. "Two thousand, if it's a cent!" he repeated aloud, turning the nugget lovingly in his great hairy hands.

"That's a thousand apiece," spoke Big Dutch slowly. And he leaned forward, closer to the gold in Olesen's hands.

The neglected coffee was boiling over and the bacon had burnt to a crisp. But still Red Olesen crouched by the fire, clutching the nugget, heedless of the yellow-toothed giant who stood over him—unconscious of the evil gleam awakening in the little pig-eyes of Big Dutch.

"That's a thousand apiece," repeated the big man, doggedly.

Slowly, furtively, Red Olesen raised his head and looked full into the ugly, sullen face of Big Dutch.

"How do you figure *that* out?" he asked coldly.

For a long, tense minute, Big Dutch unwavering, returned the threatening stare of the man with the gold. Then he stooped, poked the burnt-off ends of sticks into the fire and refilled the coffee-pot.

"Let's eat, Red," he said calmly, as he opened their little pack and took out bread and sugar. He pulled an iron fork from the pack, too, and handed it to Olesen.

Still gripping the nugget in his left hand, Red Olesen took the iron fork and fished burnt bacon from the hot pan. Without words, after the way of their kind, both men ate wolfishly.

Big Dutch finished first. With his blanket about him, he leaned back against a boulder and lit his pipe. When Olesen had eaten, he, too, lay down, across the fire from Big Dutch, holding the nugget close to his nose, and not taking his eyes from it once in a long half hour.

The moon was up now, flooding the snow-covered ice with bright light. From where he sat, his dead cold pipe gripped between yellow teeth, Big Dutch could see well out over the frozen river. And there before him, in easy range, three deer walked slowly, in single file, coming cautiously from the dark wooded bank. It was deer that had brought Big Dutch and Red Olesen on this long tramp, and the big man's loaded rifle lay near, but he made no move to take it. Instead, he settled more comfortably into his blanket and closed his eyes—almost—and snored, regularly, deeply.

To Red Olesen, weary from the

day's hard tramp, the fire was warm; he had just eaten heavily and here in his hands lay wealth—a chunk of gold that meant months of ease. The very thought caressed his mind and soothed him. There seemed something almost hypnotic in the very touch of the gold itself—and Red Olesen dozed. Delicious dreams came to him—dreams of revels in Spokane, in Seattle, in the gambling halls of the Cœur d'Alenes. By and by, the man with the gold slept soundly, his red face against the treasure.

Then furtively, Big Dutch opened his eyes—the eyes that had been *almost* closed—and cautiously, easily, for one so bulky, with not the sound of a grunt now, he rose silently to his feet and gently reached for his rifle.

Long hours later, tramping steadily down the Okanogan ice, a big man traveling alone, reached the construction camp at Wahachee dam. And far upstream, in an empty gorge, whirling wind eddies scattered the ashes of a dead camp fire.

"Red drowned!" explained Big Dutch quietly. "Three deer was crossin' the Okanogan ice near the Kitlat rapids, where the air-holes are. They was the first deer we'd seen—and we was excited at the time. As Red slips into the air-hole he grabs hold of my coat. See here, where he tore the collar? No man livin' could a pulled him out o' that strong current. It just sucked him under the ice quick and gurgled off with him."

The rough hungry men, busy at supper in the mess shack, listened in silence as Big Dutch told how Red Olesen died. They were all veterans of dangerous callings, these brawny, unkempt powdermen, bridge workers and river rats—acquainted with peril and the spectacle of violent deaths. Also, they had seen this mad river claim others, just as Big Dutch said it had claimed Red Olesen. Likewise, Big Dutch had iron fists and the teeth of a wolf; and no questions were asked.

Later, in the privacy of the cabins, a few whispered together, doubtfully, and then slept. It was only old Huggins, the garrulous camp cook, who talked openly of Red Olesen's end—but never in Big Dutch's hearing.

"I tell you, boys," he insisted in his high cracked voice, "it ain't just regular. When two men goes off in the woods, and one comes back alone—"

"Cut it out, Cookie!" admonished Crip Watkins, a powderman. "Olesen was no damn good, anyway—and if it ain't as Big Dutch says—"

"But the authorities—" began old Huggins again.

"Let them do their own worryin'," croaked the little powderman, as he limped out on the leg once fractured by a blast. "The super just sent for Big Dutch; they'll frame up a regular report and send it in. Like as not, when the ice goes out, they'll fish up what's left of Olesen, somewhere down the Columbia; the coroner'll get his fees and that'll be the end of it."

Next day, Big Dutch was sent far into the great woods to boss the timber cutters. It was weeks before Wahachee camp saw him again. Olesen's death was no longer talked of,

except by loquacious old Huggins.

A warm Chinook blew, the day Big Dutch came back, and men ate at noon without their coats. As the crew filed out of the mess shack, old Huggins beckoned slyly to his lame confidant, Crip Watkins.

"Crip," he whispered excitedly, thrusting his tobacco-stained gray beard close to the little powder man's ear, "Big Dutch is wearin' somethin' round his neck—hard and bulky—in a leather bag. I seen it when I reached over him to pour his coffee, when his shirt was open."

"Forgit it, Cookie. You're too darn suspicious," grumbled Watkins, limping away. "One of these days Big Dutch'll wring your skinny neck!"

But old Huggins did not forget it; instead, he dodged Big Dutch: shadowed him by night, and made excuses to go to his cabin, and in a week he knew what Big Dutch carried hidden in that leather bag. And one by one, the men of the camp came to know it.

Once, at supper, before Big Dutch came in, old Huggins's busy tongue was wagging.

"Speakin' of finding gold," he began, though no one had mentioned gold, "any of you boys remember them two Englishmen, Bruce and Watts, that prospected up the Okanogan in the 90's? Remember how Watts found the thousand dollar nugget in the creek bed? And how Bruce took it, just to look at it, and how he turned and beat Watts in the face with the gold till he killed him? And how he run away, and how often he washed that nugget to get the stains off of it, and how them stains always come back! And by and by, at least, so Bruce said at his trial, that nugget begun to change shape and commence to look like Watts's face—like Watts's face after Bruce had beat him to death with the chunk of gold. Then you remember how this worried Bruce till he went "bugs" and went and give himself up and was tried and hung for murder?"

"Aw, shut up—quick! and pass the bread," ordered Crip Watkins, who had sensed the bulky figure of Big Dutch—always alone now—swinging up the path to the mess-house.

The ice in the Okanogan was breaking up now, and spring work on the dam had begun.

Toward noon next day, Big Dutch, skilful in timber work, was bossing the pile driver crew. A temporary tower for driving light piles had been erected on the river's edge. Big Dutch himself, had climbed to its top to adjust the heavy pulley.

To this day, no man of that old Wahachee crew can say just what caused the accident. Some say it was a fault in building, others claim it was soft mud on the side next the current, that made the tower sag that way. Anyhow, hardly had Big Dutch reached its top, than it began to sway and totter. The crew on the ground yelled "Jump!" "Look out!" "Stay with it!" and other useless advice to Big Dutch, up there on top of the rocking tower. For a moment it reeled, then moved from the perpendicular and fell straight out into the Okanogan, crashing and splintering on the moving ice cakes.

Big Dutch sprang clear of the tower as it fell, splashing into the icy open

water that raced between the moving floes. Almost instantly, a rope was thrown to him. His position was perilous, among the huge grinding ice cakes; but if the rope held, and he could fight free of the crush, it would be easy to pull him out.

Once, as the workers ashore pulled on the rope which Big Dutch had seized and placed about his shoulders, they had him within thirty feet of the bank, but a jagged, berglike floe, traveling with a rotary motion not unlike a circular saw, emerged suddenly from the black water and bore down swiftly against the taut rope. Its sharp, serrated edge struck with a buzzing sound and sawed deliberately through several strands of the line. To the superstitious, it seemed that some unnatural force was driving that ice cake—driving it on to sever the rope that meant life to Big Dutch.

In vain the group ashore tried to slacken the rope, or throw it above that pressing, turning ice. Big Dutch, too, saw his peril and fought calmly, steadily, with singular judgment; with every ounce of his famous giant strength he sought to swim ahead of the ice, to work the rope off the edge of that jagged saw. But no matter how fast he swam, the ice seemed to float just as fast, and every time it turned over and its sharp edge scraped that tightened rope, a few more strands parted and Big Dutch's chance for life seemed less. Gradually, but surely, the rope was being sawed in two.

The men ashore, knowing that if once the rope broke, Big Dutch must be swept to death in the rapids just below, or crushed in the grinding ice, now pulled desperately on the line, hauling the struggling man close in against the intervening ice cake.

But no rope ever made could hold long against that strain and the constant chafe and cut of the ice. Suddenly, when they had drawn Big Dutch tight against the side of the turning floe, the weakened rope snapped. It seemed Big Dutch's time had come.

Then a singular thing happened—the revolving ice cake that had seemed to send Big Dutch to his doom, turned sharply over as the rope broke; it did not turn with the current now, but *sideways,* toward the shore. And there, caught on a tiny ledge in its side, sprawled Big Dutch; half over, it turned and then floated steadily, the big man fairly atop of it.

With loud shouts of encouragement, the gang ashore hastily drew in the remnant of their broken rope, one end of which they still held, and as the floe bearing Big Dutch pressed closer in to the bank, they recoiled the line and made a quick throw. It fell square across the shoulders of the man on the ice; he had now but to leap into the open water between his ice raft and the bank and be drawn to safety.

But even as the rope settled upon him and they yelled that he should jump, Big Dutch seemed to crumple on the ice. They saw him sink to hands and knees, and stare, stare in ghastly unbelief, straight into the crystal ice beneath him—and they saw horror unspeakable distort his ugly face. Then up he sprang, wildly, still staring at the ice, his scream of terror ringing loud above the roar of water

and grinding ice. And each second carried him nearer the rapids, where inevitable death lurked.

Those on the bank, running along and keeping pace with the strange raft, threw their rope to him and recoiled it and threw it again and again, and shouted frantically to him. But he heeded them not—he even shook the rope from him, when once it fell across his neck. And always he stared, like a hypnotized man, straight down into the ice beneath him.

"He is mad! Crazy mad!" gasped old Huggins, who had rushed from the cook house when the tower fell and followed the group down-stream.

Big Dutch pulled at his shirt now—literally tearing it open in his frenzy. From a string about his hairy neck he jerked a packet and wrenched from within it a flat object with a yellow mark, that glinted in the sun.

"Take it! Take it—and get back to hell with it!" he screamed, and there was the madness of fear in his bulging eyes. With a hoarse curse he flung the nugget against the ice, then reeled and plunged headlong into the foaming, angry maelstrom of grinding ice and water—at the brink of the rapids. And the nugget, balancing but a moment, slipped from the swaying ice floe and fell plump into the water, right where Big Dutch had gone down.

In dumb dread, vaguely conscious of some singular tragedy unfolding before them, the silent men ashore huddled together—afraid. Even garrulous old Huggins kept quiet—and trembled.

Then the mystery of Big Dutch's strange fate solved itself.

The giant crystal ice chunk, the one that had first cut Big Dutch's rope and then saved him from death, moved with the current close in to shore and turned slowly over within a foot of the steep bank. And there, inside the transparent ice, crouched a dead man. In his frozen right hand was clutched the collar of a corduroy coat.

And the face that peered out, startled and afraid, was the frozen face of *Red Olesen*.

Pride Of Name

BY ROSS ELLIS

Poker is the great American game of bluff, and it breeds some bluffers, like the young man in this story who "sat in" a little game with a new-found friend dressed in black.

THEY were steamer acquaintances, both having come aboard at Seattle. At San Tomasso they had gone ashore to stretch their legs. Their legs were now stretched beneath a table in a drinking booth of the town's most pretentious saloon. The older man sipped Apollinaris and frowned mild disapproval on the other's consumption of strong waters. The blond young man with the Kollege-kut clothes talked loudly and largely. After the seventh highball he held up a finger and beckoned the waiter.

"George, how about this town?" he questioned confidentially, sliding a quarter to the table's edge. "We've got some hours to kill before our boat sails. Where can we find a nice little poker game?"

The negro pocketed the coin and grinned his appreciation.

"Well, suh," he said reflectively, "Ah reckon if yo' went right upstairs to room 487, whar de light is burnin', yo' might be accommodated. Jes' rap on de do' an' ask fo' Cap'n Smiley."

The blond young man turned to his companion triumphantly. "You see, Mr. Tuttle, it's just like I told you. No matter how quiet a town may look, a chap who knows his way can find action. Come on."

The other hesitated. He was a prim-looking little man of indefinite age, garbed in sober black. Through his gold-rimmed spectacles he peered at the tempter uncertainly.

"Oh, come on!" urged the younger man, pushing back his chair and rising on legs that were a trifle unsteady. "Don't play if you have scruples. Just sit up and watch me for a while. I'll quit as soon as I win three or four fat pots."

The little black-clad man rose with a feeble smile.

"I will confess," he admitted, "that I am consumed with a desire to see you play. I can hardly realize that you are the famous 'Straightdeck' Brown—the gambler whose skill is so uncanny that he was barred from all games in Seattle. According to the newspapers, Mr. Brown, you are really a magician with the cards."

"They did give me quite a write-up, that's a fact," agreed the blond young man uncomfortably. "Well, come on if you're coming. I want to stop at the bar and get another drink."

"It astounds me that you should indulge so freely in spirituous liquors. I should have supposed that your—er-r-r—work would require a particularly clear brain."

"The booze steadies my nerves,"

explained Brown, lurching against the wall of the booth.

The consumptive "lookout" man at the door of room 487 passed them through without question, and the catechism to which they were subjected by the fat and genial Captain Smiley was perfunctory in the extreme. As a matter of fact, they were expected. Their coming had been heralded by the communicative waiter, who demanded, in accordance with an arrangement of long standing, his commission of two dollars per victim.

The evening was young and but one table was in operation. At this were seated five players, to whom Captain Smiley introduced the newcomers.

Grady, a wisp of a man with a curved spine and claw-like trembling hands, was plainly a "house-man,"—one of those bloodless creatures who outrage the spirit of chance by playing poker for wages. Perrine's brown skin and work-hardened hands supported his identification as a ranchman. Doctor Burroughs, a fattish, pink-faced person, bore the stamp of his profession. Goldman, a thin-lipped Jew, and Rasmussen, a Norwegian giant, were introduced as traveling salesmen, and they looked the part. No one seemed to doubt that the newcomers were the tourists they declared themselves to be.

Captain Smiley, beaming Master of Ceremonies, flitted about with the surprising light-footedness of a stout man and drew back two vacant chairs.

"Sit right in, gentlemen," he invited. "This is a friendly little game, and there's just room for two more good players."

Brown took the offered chair and gazed at his companion with owlish eyes. "'S' nice game," he said thickly. "Better sit in." It was evident that, whatever its effect on his nerves, the eighth highball had not improved the action of his tongue.

The black-clad Mr. Tuttle shook his head apologetically. "If you will permit me," he said, "I will sit at this other table and play—and play—solitaire."

There was a shout of laughter from big Rasmussen, in which the others joined—except Grady, who frowned with the impatience of a workman at a stoppage of the machine at which he toils.

"That's the game I ought to play," chuckled Perrine, who was a heavy loser, but whose losses had evidently not affected his spirits.

"Don't cheat yourself, parson," jeered Goldman over his towering ramparts of reds and blues.

"Play poker, men," growled Grady. "It's your deal, Perrine."

It was, it appeared, a game of considerable force and verve. Red chips were valued at one dollar each and blues at ten dollars. The blond young man parted with two hundred and twenty dollars, receiving in exchange a stack of each color. The cards were dealt. The game was on. Evidently too abashed even to watch the gamblers, little Mr. Tuttle sat at a table some distance away, studiously arranging an old pack of cards in the baffling combination of "Canfield."

In a few minutes came a howl of triumph from Brown. "A nice little four-full," he crooned. "Come to me, you chips!" And he raked in the

opening pot. "I told you I'd get 'em," he called drunkenly to the retiring Mr. Tuttle.

"Heavens-to-Betsy!" grinned Doctor Burroughs, throwing into the discard his ineffective flush. "What have I tangled up with? Your name's Brown, you say. You surely aren't this 'Straightdeck' person I've been reading about?"

"That's who I am," boasted Brown. "I'll cash in if you men are afraid to play with me."

"No-o-o," drawled the doctor, with a wink at the other players, "I'm willing to take a chance with you. I'll just play 'em a little tighter, that's all."

An hour passed. It did not seem to be a particularly profitable period for the famous Mr. Brown. Thrice the little solitaire player shook his head sadly at the sound of a thick voice demanding fresh chips from the banker. Finally the blond young man pushed back his chair with a sullen oath and lurched over to his companion's table.

"Let's go back to the boat," he said sulkily.

"Come again, 'Straightdeck,'" called Doctor Burroughs. "I like the way you play."

"Them Seattle gamboliers must be a shy lot," commented Perrine, "to be scared of *that!*"

"Ay moost go oop dere kveek," grinned Rasmussen, fondling his huge stack of chips.

"I'll beat you to it," said Goldman. "I make Seattle next week. I will give Mr. Brown a recommendation."

Little Mr. Tuttle seemed horror-stricken. "You don't mean to say," he gasped, "that these gentlemen have *beaten* you? Beaten *you?*"

"I made a mistake," whispered the other sheepishly. "You see, I was leading them on to think I was easy, and I forgot I'd left most of my roll on the boat. Before I knew it, I was broke!"

"Oh, but I can remedy that," protested the other. "Fortunately, I have ample funds with me, and I shall be glad to act as your banker. Would five hundred—a thousand—be enough?"

"Well—I—guess!" ejaculated the gambler. "Say, partner, whatever I win, I'll split with you, fifty-fifty."

Mr. Tuttle followed the rejuvenated "Straightdeck" back to the table. "If you don't mind," he addressed the grinning party, "I will take a hand—if that is the proper term. This—this is a little vacation for me," he added apologetically.

"He's been reading about me in the papers, and he wants to see me play," volunteered Brown, who was exchanging the borrowed thousand for a mighty array of chips.

"Sure, parson. Come on in and renew your youth," invited Perrin hospitably. "Shove over, Rasmussen."

The big Norwegian, who was dealing, moved his chair slightly, and Tuttle sat down at his left. The hand was played while he waited for his chips, Goldman winning with two small pairs.

"Now, parson," said Perrine, "decorate the center with two reds. It's all jack-pots. Open for what you like and bet what you've got in front of you—table-stakes, you understand. And it's your deal."

The little man picked up the pack of cards which was placed before him, and without attempting to shuffle them, began at once to deal, *three* cards to each player.

"Here!" ejaculated the pink-faced doctor, "this isn't Old Maid. *One* at a time, please."

Flushing painfully, Mr. Tuttle gathered up the pasteboards which the others threw back to him and began to shuffle them awkwardly. In his nervousness he dropped several of the cards and dived under the table to retrieve them.

"Gimme them cards," said Grady impatiently. "I'll deal for you."

"Thank you," said Mr. Tuttle, "I think I can manage it this time." And slowly, clumsily, but accurately, he completed the deal.

Doctor Burroughs groaned as he picked up his hand. "Right under the guns," he complained, "but I've got to open this for two little blues."

"With you," grunted Grady, the next man, sliding two chips to the center.

"*And* fifty," said Perrine cheerfully, making good the doctor's bet and adding five more blues.

Goldman studied his hand for a moment, then glanced around the table. "Right here," he announced, "is where the pikers go to cover. A hundred more."

"Chicken feed! Chicken feed!" scoffed the redoubtable "Straightdeck" Brown. "Let's see—as she stands, it costs me a hundred and seventy to come in. All right, all right—we'll make it an even five hundred." And he counted out chips to that value with a bombastic flourish.

Rasmussen shoved his chips in the pot without comment, though most of the color faded from his normally ruddy countenance. "Your turn next, parson," he reminded the dealer.

The little black-clad man stared at the huge pile of chips in the pot, then at his five cards, then back at the chips again. "That is a great deal of money, gentlemen," he said in a trembling voice. "I should not be justified in risking so much."

"All right, you pass," snapped the doctor. "I'm going to see that bluffer if it's the last thing I do."

The others made good the bet without further raises, and in a moment, there were heaped upon the table, chips representing the value of more than three thousand dollars.

"What do I do next?" implored Mr. Tuttle helplessly.

"Here, I'll do it for you," growled the exasperated Doctor Burroughs, seizing the pack from the table. "I don't want any cards. How many, Grady?"

Grady took one card, Perrine the same, Goldman stood pat, as did also Brown and Rasmussen.

"Check the bet," said the doctor, and "Check," echoed Grady, Perrine and Goldman.

"Check nothing," bellowed Brown. "Gentlemen and pikers, here is your great opportunity to find out whether or not 'Straightdeck' Brown is a false alarm." He pushed to the center of the table all his remaining chips. "Size up to that!" he challenged.

Grady stretched out a skinny hand and counted the chips with the skill of long practice. "Four hundred and seventy-eight dollars," he reported.

Rasmussen drew a long breath. "Ay can't stop now," he jerked out. "Ay see you for what chips Ay have—feefty dollars."

"Four hundred and twenty-eight on the side," commented Brown. "How about you, Doctor?"

"I only wish you had more money," said the medical man viciously, sliding his chips forward. He was followed in rapid succession by the three at his left, and all looked expectantly at Brown.

Before that worthy could speak, the Norwegian's taut nerves snapped. "Four treys," he stammered. "Do—d-do they win?"

"Not when I have four fives," snarled the doctor.

"Four Jacks here," grunted Grady, reaching for the pot.

"Easy, partner," warned Perrine, "mine are 'K.' cards."

He exhibited four kings, while his brown fingers closed over Grady's wrist.

"Don't quarrel, gentlemen," exulted Goldman. "I have here four little one-spots. I don't think you can top that hand, Mister 'Straightdeck' Brown." And his lean arm shot out toward the delectable heap of reds and blues.

"Hands off!" roared Brown. "Top it? Why, that's one of the easiest things I do. Look at *these!*" He spread on the table his five cards—"six, seven, eight, nine and ten of hearts. Just a *straight flush*, that's all. Gentlemen, I thank you."

He swooped down on the pot with a yell of triumph.

"So you like the way I play, do you, Doctor?" he crowed. "You think they must be easy in Seattle to let me beat 'em, do you, Perrine? You're going up there next week, are you, Goldman? Well, tell 'em that you saw me. I ain't going to take any more chances with you slick gamblers. Deal the parson and me out and get ready to cash us in. We've got to catch our boat."

Fifteen minutes later they were in a taxicab, whirling rapidly toward the pier, leaving a sorehearted crowd of gamblers behind them. By the light of the tiny electric bulb, the blond young man gleefully counted his gains. After returning the borrowed thousand, he divided the remainder into two piles, one of which he passed to his companion.

"Twenty-four hundred apiece," he chortled. "Well, Mr. Tuttle, what do you think of the way 'Straightdeck' Brown plays poker?"

"I'm a lot more interested in what other people think," said the little man in a hard voice. "That's why I sat in there and dealt you that hand. I shifted decks on them when I went after those dropped cards. Be careful how you use other people's names hereafter."

The blond young man turned brick-red.

"I don't know what you—what you—" he stammered.

"Drop it! You're no gambler. What do you do for a living when you're sober? Sell hats?" he demanded.

"I—I—"

"Is it hats?"

"N-no, shoes," admitted the other sheepishly. "But what do you care if I have a little fun posing as

'Straightdeck' Brown?"

The little man peered at him quizzically through his gold-rimmed spectacles. "Do you suppose I want anybody boasting around Seattle that a gang of rubes like those could trim 'Straightdeck' Brown? I guess not. I have some regard for my reputation."

The blond young man gasped.

"Don't tell me," he implored, "that *you* are—"

"'Straightdeck' Brown," said the little man complacently.

The Man Who Shunned the Light

BY ARTHUR LEEDS

A professor of chemistry, with the mark of Cain on his brow and conscience, crazed with his crime, proves the success of a laboratory discovery by suicide.

I RECOGNIZED Langhorn's handwriting the moment I glanced at the envelope; and to say that I was surprised at hearing from him, after so long a silence, is putting it mildly. But my astonishment and curiosity were tripled at the message which the envelope contained.

"Do not be alarmed, my dear Marden," it read, "at the contents of this letter, my first to you in so long a time. But above all, I beg of you, if ever friendship bound us together, do not fail in doing just what I am about to ask of you. If you do this for me you will see me once more; but you will never talk with me again. Yet, I have another and a very important message for you. There is something that you, if not the whole world, should know, and which will be communicated to you when next you see me. I have been living for the past two years and a half at number 108 West 57th Street —the old Partington residence—and for the past six or seven months I have been entirely alone. Now, Marden, I want you to come to me at this address, any time this afternoon *after two o'clock*. The experiment upon which I am now engaged will have been fully completed by that time; and I do not wish to have anyone —not even you—disturb me before I have quite finished. You will find the front door unlocked. Admit yourself, and come straight into my workroom, the door of which faces the front entrance. Do not fail me, old friend; there is much that you should learn concerning me and my work."

In spite of Langhorn's admonition not to be alarmed, there were two things in his note which puzzled and even startled me considerably. What did he mean by saying that if I complied with his wishes I might see him *once* more? And above all, what did he mean by saying that though I should *see* him again, I might never *talk* with him thereafter? Surely my old friend had not, in some strange way, been stricken dumb? Yet, what else could prevent him from conversing with me?

It was then eleven in the forenoon, and I spent the best part of the time until two o'clock making wild guesses as to what Langhorne could possibly mean, and what it was that he so earnestly desired to communicate to me. The taxicab which I engaged took me to the address mentioned in the note in less than half-an-hour; and as I dismissed the driver and mounted the steps, I remembered thinking that, in this great city of New York, a man might very easily become as far removed from his former associates, if he so desired, as if he were to journey to St. Petersburg or Yokohama.

As I opened the door and stepped into the hallway, I noticed that the accumulated dust of many months covered everything. I suppose I am somewhat of a crank on that subject, for on discovering nothing anywhere that resembled a hat-rack or hall-tree, I continued to hold my hat in my hand

in preference to laying it on the heavily coated chair standing against the wall on my left. It did not need my old friend's letter to convince me that he had been living alone for a long time! And what in the name of common sense was the man doing with the whole house—as it seemed to me, if one could judge by the heaviness of the air—sealed up on a stifling August afternoon? The place was as musty and close-smelling as a department store on a Monday morning; I held the street-door open for a moment or two, allowing the bright sunlight and what little breeze was stirring to enter, before I advanced farther into the hall.

At the end of this hallway, and facing the front entrance, was another door covered with a heavy damask curtain. I closed the street-door quietly, and advancing toward the rear door, laid my hand on the knob. I cannot explain what it was that made me hesitate to turn it. I can only compare the sensation to that which one experiences when, having laid a hand on one side of an electric knife-switch, he hesitates to complete the circuit by touching the other side, not knowing the severity of the shock which he may receive.

A moment's pause, and then the curiosity to know all that my old friend's letter had meant, urged me on. I swung open the door and advanced into the room.

The stuffiness of the hallway was nothing compared with the odorsome closeness of this apartment. I glanced about, wondering if it were possible that the room was without a window. As my eyes turned to the left, however, I saw that a window was there; but it, like the door by which I had entered, was heavily curtained. Observing this, I seemed to become conscious, for the first time, of the fact that the room was lighted solely by the electrolier that blazed down from the center of the ceiling—at half past two on a bright autumn afternoon! If Langhorne had recently been at work or reading in this room, why did he choose the electric light instead of the illumination provided by nature?

The intense curiosity, mingled with a vague alarm, that had filled my mind since reading his note, was growing momentarily greater. Where was he now? Why was he not here to receive me?

A second glance around the room showed me almost exactly what I had expected to find there. In the corner to the right of the curtained window, stood a roll-top desk, before which was placed a three-fold, tapestry-covered screen, in such a way as to hide the greater part of the desk from my view. Shelves, reaching to the ceiling, lined that side of the room opposite the window; these were partly filled with books, portfolios and scientific magazines.

There were, however, several things in the room from which I deduced the fact that Langhorne had been living, practically, in this one large apartment, for some time, at least. In one corner stood a rather short Davenport-bed. Not far from it, and connected by a rubber tube with an iron pipe rising a few inches from the floor, was a small gas-stove standing on a little table. It was evident that

Langhorne had not only been sleeping in this room of late, but had also prepared his own meals there. I remembered having noticed a first-class restaurant only a block down the street, and my surprise increased accordingly. My friend's epicurean tastes in the past had more than once caused me to warn him against dire results of eating and drinking too well.

Everywhere about were distributed the tools, so to speak, of his trade—a professor of chemistry. Langhorne, wild as he had been in his student days, was always an enthusiast, loving his work as a part of himself. His lapses into dissipation served only to emphasize more strongly the true nature of the man—his determination, his originality of thought and ideas, his firmness in the face of argument, (even of ridicule, when he put forward a theory too startlingly original to be passed over in mere controversy), and his absolute devotion to his life work.

I was aware of the fact that up to the time when I had completely lost track of him, about three years before, he had contributed regularly to various medical and scientific journals; of late, however, I had not seen his name mentioned in any of the reviews, nor, so far as I was aware, had any of his articles been published. But I knew Langhorne was the kind of a man who, having his work to carry on, could readily adapt himself to any part of the world; and for some time it had been my belief that he had gone abroad, without advising any of his old friends, and was now, probably, conducting his experiments and researches in one of the European capitals.

It suddenly occured to me that the professor might have stepped out to make a purchase at one of the near-by stores; that that was his reason for telling me in his note to admit myself upon my arrival. Concluding that this must be the case, I prepared to sit down and await his return. No chair was to be seen, however; the only seat was the Davenport in the corner. But a glance in the direction of the screen caused me to conclude that there would naturally be an office-chair before the desk which, as I have said, the screen almost hid from view.

Advancing, I took hold of it by both sides and drew the folds together, preparatory to putting it to one side. As it closed up, it almost fell from my hands as I stepped back in startled bewilderment.

A chair was there, as I had expected. But in it sat Randall Langhorne, head and shoulders bent over the desk, his face the color of the cigar ash that lay on a little tray at his side. The left arm hung straight down over the side of the chair; the hand was tightly clenched. His right arm was sprawling across the desk, and the hand, which gripped a graduate-glass, was resting against the drawers at the back. There still remained on the inside of the glass perhaps a teaspoonful of dark, purplish liquid, and the fingers which grasped it, as well as the white blotter beneath, were stained a deep brown, recalling the discoloration left by a solution of potassium permanganate.

After the first shock, I had invol-

untarily reached out to grasp Langhorne's shoulder. But even as I did so, I paused and drew back my arm.

His face was turned to the right; his eyes, wide open, seemed fixed with staring fascination at the glass in his hand. And in the corner, close to the hand, an envelope stood upright against the drawer. On it I read the one word—"Marden." In front of this, flat on the desk, lay a sheet of typewriter bond paper, upon which, in large letters, had been written the startling request:

"Do not touch me, Marden! Do not lay a finger upon me until you have read this letter!"

In spite of myself, I shuddered as I read the admonition. There was something terrifying, some sinister suggestion in the words. Not that it was necessary to touch the man to tell that he was dead. The ashen face, the wide, staring eyes, the blackened lips, stained with the same brown color which disfigured the hand—from all these signs I judged that at least an hour must have passed since life had fled from this pitiable heap before me. It was the note that I dreaded; some unknown horror seemed to be lurking in its message. In spite of myself, I felt that I would give almost anything if I could only avoid opening it at all.

But Langhorne's last wish, his dying request, in fact, had been that I read this message and share his secret, whatever it was, with him. With a trembling hand I picked up the envelope and tore it open, and read:

"My dear old friend, in this, my last hour, I can turn only to you. Not for pity, though, Marden; pity and sympathy are not for such as I. I seek only your assistance in what will be my final experiment. I have met with considerable success in the past, as you know. I have proved my theories correct, as a rule; only once or twice have my experiments failed. My heartfelt prayer to God, now is, that this last test of my knowledge will be successful also. First, however, I must tell you my miserable story.

"You will remember the night when, just after you had returned from the Pacific coast, we met at the bar of the Cadillac. Kenyon was with me when you came in, and so was young Ludlow—the fellow some of the boys used to call 'the Lucios diamond kid.' You will remember, also, that while you were with us, Ludlow behaved himself extremely well—for Ludlow.

"About ten o'clock, you left us, saying that you were going home. After you had gone, we drifted over to Churchill's; and it was shortly after one o'clock when Ludlow and I (Kenyon went off about midnight) were requested to leave the back room of a saloon in the neighborhood of Columbus Circle. I can remember passing the monument as we started home. I hadn't told you where I was living, Marden—in fact, I hadn't told anyone. Knowing me as you did in the old days, you know why. When I worked, I worked with all there was in me to labor with. I didn't want to be disturbed; I didn't want to be tempted away when my work called me. I knew my weakness; so I cut myself off from everyone. I met you three fellows that night by the merest chance.

"But it was the devil in the form of Ludlow who walked with me that night, Marden. As we staggered along, he kept up a running fire of sneering remarks. First I was a 'would-be-famous scientist.' Then I was 'the greatest bluff that ever graduated.' Finally he declared that I was a 'hermit, a recluse merely for the sake of being called eccentric, but clever.'

"The liquor, I suppose, must have made me good-natured, rather than otherwise, for I simply laughed at his insults; and we went on together. Then, two blocks away from here, I said good-night and tried to leave him; but it was of no avail. Again and again, he asked me to take him to where I was living. At last he dared me to take him home with me. Mad, drunken fool that I must have been, I did.

"What followed, I must write down quickly. Even now my hand trembles, and I need all my strength for what is to come.

"Ludlow threw himself into this very chair where I now sit, one leg over the arm, swinging himself in a half-circle. At once he recommenced his drunken abuses, and I, as before, laughed at him. Suddenly, he took from his pocket a flask of brandy—I had no idea that he had any liquor upon him—and, after swallowing nearly half of it, he tossed it over to me. With drunken recklessness, I drained the flask; and just then Ludlow swung around and faced the desk.

"Marden, you remember the woman in my case? The *one* woman? I know you do; so I won't disgrace her fair name by putting it into this horrible confession. But *her* photograph was there, on top of the desk; and as Ludlow saw it he snatched it down. With a laugh that seemed to me like the cry of a beast, he swung around and faced me again.

"I won't—I could not repeat his words, old friend; they were unutterably vile. And he meant *that* of *her*, Marden, the woman upon whose grave, every Sunday since God took her from me, I had placed the white roses. I heard only his first sentence or two; from that moment, as God is soon to judge me, I forgot what really happened. I can dimly remember that Ludlow, very suddenly, became silent. Then, like one under the influence of an anæsthetic, I lost consciousness of everything.

"And, now, Marden, the end, but briefly. It must have been the morning sun, falling across my face as it entered this window which you see now darkly curtained, which at last awakened me. The moment I sat up I saw Ludlow; and in that moment I knew that he was dead. Then, in a flash, all came back to me, dimly—all, that is, up to the time he spoke those words. Weakly, I got up and went to him. As I leaned over the body, I saw, with horror, the deep cut in his left temple, and then the empty flask lying on the rug at his feet. That flask had been in my hand as he started to speak of her—the last words he had ever spoken! But he had driven me to it—he, the beast, the loose-tongued idler! Then the greatest horror of all came home to me. No one had seen Ludlow entering the house with me. I could easily tell Kenyon that he had left me and started for his home. I could just as easily dispose of Ludlow's body—which, Marden, I finally did—in such a way that it would never be found. But could I, could I ever again be happy, care-free, unhampered by the guilty chain that I had bound myself with on that accursed night of folly and dissipation? Would not the accusing sunlight, God's sunlight, which now flooded the room, forever cry out and mock me? Would I not hear forever in my ears the words, 'At the setting of one sun you were an innocent man. Life was yours to make what you would of; Fame was yours to win; Honor was yours, and Happiness—the memory of Love, sweeter, often, than the realization, belonged to you. But the night came in between; and at the rising of another sun you were a murderer, a useless thing, an outcast until life shall be over for you. Only then will come peace!'

"Marden, from that day to this, I have never seen the light—God's light. I could not; the horror of the past would only have been intensified. Up to about six months ago, I kept one servant, a combined valet and assistant. He was a good fellow and faithful, but I let him go. Since then I have been quite alone. The telephone brought to me all that I required; but everything was left in the hallway; I never saw the front door open. I have contributed to the scientific journals frequently—you may have read something by 'Franklin Mathison.'

"But, now, Marden, it must end. 'Only then will come peace!' Now, I ask your aid—it will be easily given. For two months I have been working continuously on something which, had I lived an innocent man, might have brought me fame. Years ago, I conceived the idea of a liquid which, when injected into a dead body as we now inject embalming fluid, would have a directly opposite effect to that produced by the latter preparation. In other words, instead of preserving the body, it would destroy it utterly, bone and tissue alike. My theory was that the liquid would be entirely absorbed by every portion of the body, so that, having finished its subtle work of destruction, it would leave the corpse literally a mass of clay in the form of a man or woman—clay that could be almost instantly converted into an unrecognizable heap of dust. The idea was originally suggested by the remarks of a cousin of mine, who had a horror of being buried alive, and who, nevertheless, dreaded the idea of cremation. Again, I thought would not this be the easiest and most practical way of disposing of the bodies of executed criminals? There would also be a dozen different uses to which it could be successfully put in surgical work of different kinds.

"Well, old friend, I have at last completed my work. I believe I have succeeded; but it will be for you to prove that. The failure or success of this, my last experiment, will never be known to me. But, I pray, you know not, Marden, how earnestly I pray, that it may be as I have hoped.

"By the addition of one other ingredient I have prepared a special fluid which, when I *drink* it, as I shall do after signing this, will, I believe, produce in my body the changes of which I have spoken. Thus will I efface myself from the world of men—and of sunlight. Thus, in this death-chair, will I give my life to atone for the taking of *his* life, unworthy though he was. You will keep my secret, I know. God grant that the keeping of it may not weigh too heavily upon you! And now for the final test, and may God have mercy upon me! May happiness and peace be yours, Marden. Farewell!"

Tears filled my eyes as I concluded this terrible letter, the laying bare of a man's innermost soul. I knew Langhorne's sensitive nature; I realized how the constant brooding upon his crime had so preyed upon him, that the poor, broken, prematurely gray-haired wreck of a man that now sprawled in the office-chair was the result. As for his "experiment"—poor Langhorne. I understood, now, that toward the end, his mind had given away, and that the swallowing of the draught in the graduate-glass had produced no other result than he might have brought about with a well-aimed revolver bullet.

Something seemed to bedim the brightness of the electrolier, and a gloom which penetrated to the depths of my soul filled me as I laid the letter back on the desk and looked around. The Davenport caught my eye; I would lay the remains of my poor friend there, while I went out to notify the proper authorities. That part of the letter referring to his crime, I would destroy; and his secret, as he had said, would be safe with me. The other parts of his note would make plain the manner in which he had ended his own life. I could, of course, have made use of the telephone to get in communication with those who must now be called in, but I longed to get a breath of fresh air, and to escape into the very sunlight that poor Langhorne had apparently dreaded so deeply.

I had laid my hat down on the Davenport; now I picked it up and put it on the table. Then, crossing again to the chair—truly, as he had said, a death-chair—I stopped and placed my left hand upon the man's shoulder, while at the same time I grasped his right hand in an attempt to detach the glass from the cramped fingers.

As I did so, that part of what sat there in the chair, crumpled under my touch and fell away, like the sand falling through an hour-glass, and as I reeled back in unutterable dismay and horror, I saw the right sleeve flatten out limply upon the desk, while in place of the hand which held the graduate was a small heap of gray-black dust!

I closed my eyes. As I opened them again, I saw in the chair only a disordered pile of clothing, with a great deal more of the gray-black dust on the floor and the arms of the chair. Scattered about were little bunches of prematurely gray hair, and I knew, as I gazed, *that Randall Langhorne's last experiment had been crowned with success!*

Fortune's Understudy

BY VIOLETTE KIMBALL DUNN

From ransacking a bare larder to $500 *is the sudden turn of the wheel of fortune experience by an out-of-a-job and hungry actress. A too-zealous store detective and some visiting cards help in the transformation.*

I HAVE had an adventure! That is startling enough, goodness knows, for me, whose days have limped from a scanty breakfast, to a problematical dinner for so long, I've lost count long ago. *Had* lost count, I should say, for lately I've been busy trying not to collapse from over-eating!

My predicament was commonplace enough to be unworthy of notice, yet, somehow, it tickled my sense of humor! To have a decent position in my alleged profession, a good engagement a few weeks off, a few very expensive clothes,—and not even a motor-bus fare in my vanity case, was a piece of satire I thoroughly appreciated. My rehearsals didn't begin for a month; the money I had saved had melted, mysteriously, as money melts when none is coming in; I had pawned all the jewelry I had worth pawning, but my clothes I was obliged to keep, because they were part of my stock in trade. Don't think you're going to read a tirade on the economic position of women, or a hard luck story —you're not. The fittest will always survive, and I've never been able to get rid of the notion that I was one of them, and should pull through. Most of my friends were out of town for the summer, the ones that were left being here because they couldn't afford to go anywhere else, and my greatest dread was that they would come to me to borrow the money I didn't have to give them. At last I sublet my apartment, because I couldn't afford to keep it, and took myself and my scanty exchequer down to a rooming house just off the avenue. It was kept by a reduced gentlewoman who had seen better days—they all are!—and was very select; the variety is as common as the moth-eaten cats that prowl ceaselessly about their basement doors. I detest them all—the houses, not the cats—too heartily to go into details. This one, being a bit less objectionable than most of them, was too expensive for me to indulge in anything but a tiny room on the top floor. There was only one other theatrical person in the house—Jessie McKee, a dear subdued little soul, in a room the counterpart of mine, across the hall. And the scene is set!

I suspected Jessie of being in the same boat with me, but I couldn't be sure. One never can. She didn't discuss her affairs, and she was always beautifully dressed, as I was. Cooking being strictly forbidden, of course, the same fugitive whiffs of coffee came through her key-hole o'

mornings, as through my own. And she probably spent the same frantic moments trying to shoo them out of the window, instead. Often, too, there was a quickly smothered clink of china, at dinnertime. But each of us went on with our little bluff, which very likely deceived nobody but ourselves, until last Thursday night, when I sat down and took account of stock. I had been waking each morning to that slogan of the out-of-workers, "Something nice may happen today!" and as nothing had, I wanted to know the worst. And I may as well confess that, for a moment, after I had counted up my little hoard, I lost my nerve, and had a fit of panic! I had exactly eight dollars to my name! The next day I was due to hand six dollars and a half of that over to my landlady, but that would at least assure me of a roof over my head for another week. The margin for food and carfare was not, however, princely. As a matter of fact, I was very much frightened.

Suddenly I remembered an old actress telling me that she had once lived for a week on unsalted oatmeal and water, and I found myself saying, "Well, I don't care, I can't eat it without salt, whatever happens!" That made me laugh, and I felt better. The deuce of it is, it's harder when we've managed to creep a few rungs up the ladder, than it was when we still had one foot on the ground. For then, if we moved at all, it had to be up—there wasn't any farther down to go! Why they load us up with work when they think we have everything we want, I've often wondered. On the other hand, once let a suspicion get abroad that we're not quite so much in demand as we were; or, what is still more fatal, that we really *need* food and clothes, and is the offer of work forthcoming? Usually, it is not! So it wasn't so much false pride that prompted me to go about with my nose in the air, but more that I really didn't dare lower it. Also, I had no romantic notion about starving quietly in my room, as has been done before. I had a very healthy instinct to live! There is always something to be done, even if it's only to put on your old clothes, change your name, and show someone how nicely you can scrub a kitchen floor.

But the night I found out how poor I really was, I was awfully tired, and rather hungry, and I guess my sense of humor had gone to sleep. I examined my commissariat hopefully, only to find a bottle of milk and seven graham crackers. I was too foot sore to go out again, and I felt so sorry for myself, I sat down in my best clothes and began to cry. Then I caught sight of myself in the glass and suddenly realized how much I was like the first act of one of the season's plague of crime plays—beautiful young heroine, goaded to despair by hunger, and all that sort of thing, that I laughed instead. I have found situations often become funny, if translated into terms of the modern drama. Is this a commentary on dramatist or manager? Perhaps we'd better not inquire. Anyway, I ate the crackers and drank the milk, and promised myself I'd sleep late enough the next morning to make brunch—

an excellent combination of breakfast and luncheon, by the way—do duty until dinner time.

Alas! At nine o'clock the next morning, there came a knock at my door. I tried to make myself believe I hadn't heard it—that subterfuge as old as man—and go on with my dream, but it kept up, until I finally sat up and pushed the hair out of my eyes, calling peevishly:

"Who is it, and what on earth do you want?"

"It's Jess," came back plaintively. "Please don't be cross! I wouldn't have waked you, but I thought I heard you up half an hour ago."

"Never mind," I said, trying to be amiable, as I slipped into my kimono and slippers, and opened the door. "Come on in. What's the matter?"

Jess said nothing, but crept in and curled up on the foot of the bed. She looked so little and childish, crouching there, that I had an attack of conscience.

"What is it, honey?" I asked again. And then I noticed that her eyes were full of tears.

"I'm hungry—I'm really *awfully* hungry," she choked, "and I want my breakfast, and I haven't any breakfast! So I came to see if you'd give me some of yours."

I was horrified. Then I remembered the state of my larder, and laughed. Without a word, Jess slid down off the bed and started for the door.

"Oh, don't!" I cried, jumping up and pulling her back. "I didn't mean to laugh, honestly I didn't!"

Jess came back, dabbing her eyes with her handkerchief.

"It isn't a bit funny," she said.

"It's funny for you to ask me for part of my breakfast when I haven't any, myself!"

She climbed up on the foot of the bed again and put her head down and began to cry. I can't *bear* to see anybody cry!

"Oh, come, honey, don't!" I said, sitting down beside her. "We'll find something to eat, somewhere!"

"I'm not crying for my breakfast, silly," she choked. "I'm crying because it feels so nice and happy to tell you about it."

I wondered suddenly, how many more like us there might be in these same side streets!

We had a funny breakfast party. We rummaged around in Jess's room first, and finally brought to light two obscure eggs she didn't know she had. We fell upon these with shrieks of joy, very much excited. Then I got out a little coffee I had saved and two or three crackers from the night before, and we made coffee, and scrambled the eggs over my little gas stove, which felt much less like a cheap melodrama. After breakfast, we washed our dishes, feeling very domestic, and then I remembered that I had to have a spool of darning silk.

"Let's walk down the avenue to Smith's, and get it there," said Jess. Darning silk doesn't cost any more in an expensive place than in a cheap one, and I haven't been inside that shop for so long, it will be like having a party!"

"All right," I answered, "we can make ourselves miserable, wishing for all the lovely things we see."

"And then," said Jess mysteriously,

"we'll go on down to Lamm's. That's farther on, and by the time we've walked there, we will be hungry enough for luncheon."

"*That* will be nice!" I answered, thinking of my dollar and a half, but Jess smiled knowingly.

"You don't get what I mean," she said. "You must know that all the cheaper class of department stores have grocery departments, don't you?"

"I certainly do."

"Well," she went on, "this week they're having a demonstration of a nice new kind of breakfast food. Last week it was jelly—awfully good, too! This stuff is thick, like porridge, and it really isn't bad, especially when they goo it up with a lot of cream."

"I'm sure you're right, but what—" I began.

"Just wait a minute, and I'll tell you. You go up to the woman, smile sweetly, and ask her questions about it. Then she gives you some to try. Sometimes she gives you a lot, and then it makes a very decent meal. Now do you see?"

"I should say I did!" I answered. "But how in the world did you ever happen to think of such a thing?"

Jess grinned at me like a mischievous child.

"I read about it in last Sunday's paper," she gurgled. "I've been to some shop for it every day this week, but I haven't tried Lamm's yet. I've been saving that, and we'll go there today."

"It's a shame we haven't got to having women Presidents yet!" I said. "When we do, if you're not too old to run, you can count on my vote! It's wicked to waste you on the stage, when your country needs you, my child!"

Jess was very much elated at the success of her scheme, and eager to start out, so we dressed, and fared forth into the avenue. And nothing told us that the little tin god of good adventures had his eye on us and had marked us for his own! We bought our darning silk at Smith's, and then started for Lamm's. Whether they all came for breakfast food, I don't know, but the place was packed. I was for getting away at once, though foodless. It's amazing how fervently I can love my brother man, if I don't have to rub shoulders with him! But every aisle was lined with wonderful things, and it would have been asking too much of the soul of woman, to pass them by without a glance. We stopped to look longingly at some lovely cobweb lace, when up went the curtain to our little drama! After harrowing our souls sufficiently, we moved away. We had gone several feet, when Jess looked down and saw that I was dragging after me a long, filmy piece of lace, which had caught on my mesh bag. Of course I stopped, and seeing that no harm had come to it, I folded it up carefully and started back with it. The crowd was very dense, but I finally succeeded in working my way through it to the lace counter, and regretfully laid the exquisite thing back in its native element. There didn't seem, as I look back over it, to be anything especially surreptitious about my actions. But as we started for the door, a mild-looking little man at my elbow remarked casually:

"I'll have to trouble you for that

piece of lace, please, and anything else you may have taken from the store."

Of course I didn't understand him, and as I thought he was trying to be impertinent, I suppose the glare I gave him didn't really help matters any. Then he repeated his remark. This time, though I heard the words he said, I still didn't take them in.

"Is it possible that you are speaking to *me?*" I finally asked, incredulously.

"Very possible," he replied calmly. "If you haven't taken anything else, and this is your first offense, I may be able to get you off, simply by returning the lace. If not, it will be a more serious matter."

I was so dumbfounded by this time, I must have looked as guilty as if I made my living robbing widows and orphans!

"Are—are you seriously accusing me of stealing something from this store?" I stammered. Jess turned suddenly white as a sheet.

"It would make it so much simpler if you wouldn't all pretend to be innocent!" he remarked, in a tired voice.

"But I *haven't* taken anything, I tell you!" I cried. "You must be mad!" And suddenly my nerve came back, on a great wave of anger.

"Oh, of course if you like to do it this way, it doesn't make any difference to me," he answered. "There isn't any use denying it, because a saleswoman *saw* you pretend to catch the lace in your bag, and then when you thought you were out of sight, fold it up, and put it away. It's a very old trick. The crowd was so thick, she lost sight of you then, until just as she pointed you out to me."

I was white with rage, but I suppose he mistook it for fear.

"And I suppose it was too thick for her to see me make my way through the crowd and put it back on the counter, wasn't it?" I asked, trying to be calm.

"It certainly was!" he said, sarcastically, "and she is prepared to identify you, so kindly come with me."

Here I suddenly gave Jess an awful pinch.

"If you *dare* to faint—" I began, fiercely.

"Kindly don't try to communicate with your confederate!" said the man at my elbow.

"Don't be an idiot!" I snapped, turning on him. "Look at her! Does she look like anybody's confederate?"

"No, she don't," said the detective, unmoved, "and that's why I know she is! You can't fool me! The innocent looking ones are always the worst."

"See here, you're making the mistake of your life!" said I, making a last appeal. "You can see for yourself, I have no place to hide yards of lace!" The man smiled smugly. I could have slapped him!

"I'm not quite so easy as that!" he said, provokingly. "You may have a dozen places to hide things, for all I know. Anyway, the matron will find out, when she searches you."

How can anyone believe in circumstantial evidence? I'd like to write a book about it! That fool saleswoman swore she'd seen me hide the lace, and probably believed it herself when she said it. I was in such a white heat by that time, I was perfectly calm, and

didn't care what they did! They took us upstairs to the matron's office, where, quite unmoved, she searched us both. And she certainly knew her business! Everything about me was a hiding place to her! She searched me, from the buckles of my pumps, to the flowers in my hat, and I fully expected to see her produce a diamond ring from my hollow tooth!

But when it was all over, and nothing was found on either of us but my spool of darning silk, wrapped, and obviously paid for, the woman looked very grave. When we were dressed once more, she called the store detective, who had been lurking around outside, like a cat at a rat-hole.

"I'm afraid there's a very serious mistake here!" she said in a low tone. "These young ladies haven't any stolen goods on them. But—" she leaned over, and whispered something I couldn't catch. The effect was immediate. He suddenly became stiff with horror!

"I—I assure you—" he stammered, turning to me.

"Don't trouble yourself to assure me of anything," I interrupted. I've never had such a struggle with my temper in my life! "If you've quite finished with us, I'll go now and find the store manager. I have something to say to him that may interest him!"

He remonstrated feebly, but I just took a firm hold of Jess and marched out. The poor child had wilted by that time, and I almost had to carry her. I, oddly enough, was beginning to feel strangely exhilarated, and ready for anything. I trailed the manager from one end of the shop to the other, before I finally ran him to earth in his office. He was a great deal harder to see than the President, and I remembered afterwards that he was very charming. At the time, I was not in the mood to know!

He took one look at us, listened to what I had to say, then sent for the detective, the saleswoman, and the matron.

"What can I do?" he asked finally, when he had heard us all.

"My lawyer will probably be able to tell you that," I answered, indifferently. I was almost enjoying myself!

"Your lawyer!" he repeated, blankly.

"Certainly, my lawyer," I replied, briskly. "I shall only stipulate that he give as much publicity to the affair as he can. It will be a good thing for your patrons to know what may lie in store for them in the course of a morning's shopping here!"

"Surely, you don't mean that!" began the manager, when the matron broke in.

"The taller of the ladies had two of Mrs. Montgomery Mason's cards in her bag!" she said impressively. So *that* was the magic word! Its effect on the manager was as immediate as on the detective.

"My *dear* Mrs. Mason, this is *awful!*" he began, abjectly.

"It is, indeed!" I remarked, icily. "However, I'm not Mrs. Mason. Mrs. Mason is my aunt, and I'm sure both she and my uncle will be very much interested when I tell them of this!"

It didn't seem necessary to add that they were both in Europe; also, that since I had gone on the stage, my in-

fluence over them had not been what might be called startling. The manager motioned to the others to leave the room. When they had gone, he said quickly:

"I can't tell you how sorry I am that this should have happened! But you must see that we can't have it get out!"

"Wouldn't it have been a good thing to have thought of that beforehand?" I asked coldly.

"Yes, it would," he admitted, "but you have no idea of the amount of shoplifting that goes on in these big stores. The clerks have instructions to watch everyone. That young woman was over-zealous, that's all!"

"I'm sure you're right, but I'm not willing to be a victim of her imagination!" I answered, starting for the door.

"I know, and I can't blame you," he said distressedly, "but yet I beg of you not to make this affair public! If we could only settle it now, in some way—"

And right there I saw what was going to happen, and I nearly lost my breath.

"Of course, that might be arranged in some way," I managed to say indifferently.

"I knew you would be generous!" he said, with a relieved sigh. "We will be glad to settle for five hundred dollars, to keep this out of the papers. May I give you a check for that amount now? And will you, in your turn, give me your word to let it end here?"

"Why, yes; I suppose that will be satisfactory," I said, trying not to gasp. "And in that case, I will, of course, drop the matter."

When I managed to drag Jess out, a few minutes later, I had a check for five hundred dollars, and he had my receipt for it, and I didn't really know whether I was in New York, or the moon! We came to, partially, out on the sidewalk. Jess stopped staring into space and looked at me.

"Wh—wh—where are we going now?" she asked, in a dazed voice. I took her by the arm.

"Back to the grocery department, of course. We haven't had our breakfast-food. Then to the Waldorf, to divide five hundred dollars!"

On the Roof

BY HAROLD DE POLO

Imagine yourself dead broke and then a proposition to test a parachute of uncertain value by jumping off a thirty story building for two hundred and fifty dollars. Would you take the chance? This man did.

YOUNG Tommy Derrick emerged from the swinging doors of the Sixth Avenue pawnshop and stood in the entrance for a moment, while he nonchalantly tucked up the cuffs of his now linkless shirt. He smiled quite pleasantly as he finished the task and casually surveyed the two dollar bill loaned him on his gold buttons. There was a certain air of careless amusement on his frank, strong-jawed face, that was not at all in keeping with his apparent condition. He was, without doubt, slightly hard up. He was garbed in excellent form; but, although the cloth showed quality, it also was just beginning to show the various spongings and pressings it had been through.

The links, indeed, had been Mr. Derrick's very last intrinsic asset. Nevertheless, with a final smiling glance at the bill, he tucked it into his pocket and started briskly up the avenue in search of substantial, yet reasonable, food.

"I beg your pardon." He heard a quiet voice behind him and felt a slight tap on his shoulder.

Turning, he saw before him a rather tall, wiry person, apparently in comfortable circumstances, with a thin, sun-coppered face, that told of much time spent in the open. His chief characteristic, though, was a pair of steely gray eyes that looked out at one firmly and unflinchingly.

Tommy smiled genially. "My dear sir, your pardon's unnecessary—but what may I do for you?"

The older man—perhaps he was between thirty-five and forty—looked at Tommy's firm, clean jaw for the second time. "I'd like to speak with you. First, though, let me tell you why. I liked the way you came out of that pawnshop. You didn't come with a hanging head—instead, you came with a smile of amusement as you tucked up your sleeves and looked at the two dollar bill you had received. Probably it's all you have; for—pardon me again, please—although you look exceedingly neat and tidy, it is apparent to a few people that you're not—not exactly prosperous, eh?" He smiled interrogatively.

"You certainly win," grinned Tommy. "This youthful bill is my last. Rotten luck. Nothing left to hock, down and out in a strange town, and just turning seedy. But," with a breezy wave of his hand, "something always turns up, you know!"

The other eyed him closely. "What about sitting down some place where we can have a drink and talk things over?"

"Glad to sit down, my friend; but,

if it's just the same to you, I kind of think I could go something to eat much better."

"Immaterial!" answered the stranger, leading the way at the same time, over to Broadway and food.

"My name 's Halstone," he explained, when they were seated in a quiet corner.

"They call me Tommy Derrick," averred that young man in return.

The other nodded. "Well, it's like this. You yourself admit that you're quite broke—very well. To do what I want him to do, I presume that the man *would* have to be fairly short before he took the chance. I want, above all, a man with good nerve—and when you left that shop, as I told you, you looked as if you had it. Ah, by the way, are you married or have you any ties that would suffer by your death?"

Tommy shook his head lightly, pausing in his attack on the juicy steak before him. "Absolutely none. Orphan—twenty-six—just back from bossing a lumber camp in Canada—dead broke—sound health—don't care what I do—best references furnished!" Again he made an assault on his food.

Halstone, apparently, liked this answer. "That rather suits me!" he said slowly. Then, looking Tommy straight in the eyes, he continued, "What I want is this. I have, as I think, just perfected the smallest and safest parachute the world has ever known. Well, I naturally have to try it out before putting it on the market. Why don't I do so myself, you might ask! Simply because, should it fail, I want to still live and be able to correct its faults. I know that I can surely do it in time—therefore, I believe it to be a great and good thing for the world. Well, now, I want it tested from the top of one of our big skyscrapers. If you care to try the stunt, Mr. Derrick, it will mean exactly two hundred and fifty to you—how's that?" He searched Tommy's face carefully as he paused and put the question.

Tommy finished his last mouthful of steak. "M-m-m-m! Sounds pretty good to me, all right. But say, just what do you think the chances are of this umbrella thing working?"

"Just about half and half, to tell the truth," answered the other.

Tommy sipped his coffee. "Good stuff. Fifty-fifty suits me to a T!"

Again Halstone seemed pleased with the answer given him. "Oh, by the way; you will also be able to pick up an extra couple of hundred or so, if you like. There's a moving picture concern that wants a picture of a blindfolded man forced to jump off a high roof by the villain. As I know the manager, he thought the real thing would be something new and make a good scoop. Therefore, if you don't mind bandaging your eyes when you jump, he'll probably let you have a couple of hundred. You see, in the film, they'll be able to erase the parachute end of it and it will look like the real thing! How about it?"

Tommy sighed with gusto after his meal. "Tell him that for a couple of hundred he can bandage my whole body!"

Halstone smiled. "I guess you're my man, without doubt!"

"I certainly am!"

"Fine! How about tomorrow morning at ten, on top of the Eagle Building?"

"Suits me!"

"Very well—at ten, then!"

Mr. Thomas Derrick, at a few minutes before ten the next morning, made his way to the roof of the Eagle Building, that loomed up into the sky of lower Broadway for some thirty stories. Everything was in preparation for him. He saw a platform, raised some six feet, from which he was to make his leap; also, there was the moving picture operator with the machine in readiness.

Halstone came forward with outstretched hand and a smile. "Didn't change your mind, eh?"

"Oh, I'm still agreeable," replied Tommy blithely.

Halstone eyed him seriously. "Remember, Derrick, that I've warned you about the chances you're taking—They're about half in your favor, perhaps, as I said. Also, I'd like you to sign a paper exonerating me from all blame in case anything should happen to you!"

"Trot it out!" said Tommy lightly.

The other did so, and young Mr. Derrick put his name to it after giving it a casual glance.

"Now," said Halstone, "here is the parachute—here is the wonderful invention—the invention that will doubtless save countless lives in the future!"

Tommy took hold of the outthrust object and looked at it critically. "Huh—looks like an enlarged edition of an umbrella. That's all *I* can see—except that it has a few more flaps and ribs and things to it!"

"Yes," was the answer, "it *does* look like an umbrella—nothing more. That is the beauty of it. It takes up hardly any room and is so easy to carry!"

Tommy pursed his lips. "And that thing's supposed to be able to hold me safely while I take that little thirty-story drop?"

"It is—it is! I certainly hope so, at least! Remember, though—you've been warned!"

"Oh, I'm not crying, you know! Simply seems hardly possible! But, being broke and in need of a few hundred, I—oh, come ahead; let's get the thing over with!"

Mr. Thomas Derrick, for all his easiness, was very, very much in love with the whole world at large—it must not be thought otherwise. Nevertheless, he *was* broke. Also, he knew that if one did a thing one might as well do it calmly and gracefully. Again, anything in which he stood what he called a fifty-fifty chance, was good enough for him. Withal, as he stepped up on to the raised platform and looked down at Broadway, that seemed miles and miles below, he allowed a little whistle to escape his lips.

Halstone was watching him closely. He spoke sharply. "Nervous?"

Tommy shook his head and grinned slowly. "No. Just thinking that it would surely ruin my looks some if it didn't work, eh?"

"Rather!"

"Well, let's have the umbrella and slip that bandage around my eyes. No use waiting!"

"All right. Get ready there, oper-

ator!" He climbed on to the platform beside Tommy and tied a thick cloth about his eyes.

"See anything?"

"Good Lord, no!" answered Tommy, standing straight and firm without a tremble going through him.

"All right, then," returned Halstone, giving young Mr. Derrick a look of the highest admiration from his cool gray eyes.

He placed the parachute in Tommy's hands. "Take hold firmly, now, and keep your hands well above your head and your body straight. Don't squirm or kick. Also, jump far enough out so that you won't strike against the side of the building. Here," he turned Tommy about, "now you're facing the right direction, so don't move. When I say three, jump far out and straight ahead of you!"

"Let her go!" sang out Tommy, fervently hoping that the thing would work.

In a moment or so—it seemed longer to Tommy, to be frank—came the first number.

"One!"

"One!" he answered clearly.

To Tommy it was as if many minutes had passed before the second came, yet he stood straight and still with his jaw thrust out rigidly.

"Two!"

"Two," he repeated, his head unconsciously going higher.

Halstone, this time, must have waited ages and ages. Tommy heard the moving picture machine grinding away. He wished, since it was bound to come, that the final word would be spoken. At last it was.

"Three!"

Tommy, now, did not repeat the word; but, with a stiffening of his body, raised his hands high above his head, and sprang clear from the platform in a high, straight leap, not a quiver of hesitation showing.

Tommy heard an applauding cry burst from Halstone's lips. Then, almost simultaneously, he felt his feet strike something hard and found himself sprawling on a rough surface all in a heap, the parachute flying from his grasp.

"What—what the—what the—" he gasped.

He heard, next, a hearty laugh. Then, suddenly, he put his hands to his head and pulled the bandage from his eyes. He looked about him dazedly; for there, above him, was the platform; also, Halstone and the moving picture operator were roaring loudly at the spectacle he made as he sat there on the roof, his face thunderstruck.

"What—what the—" He could say no more.

Halstone stepped forward, put out his hand, and jerked him on to his feet.

"Derrick," he said quickly, "I must apologize, old man, for trying the trick on you. But the thing is this. My name's Halstone, as I told you—but I'm Halstone the explorer. I want to make a trip into the wildest part of Africa, and I need just one white man along with me. I wanted to get hold of a man who had, what I thought, was real nerve in facing danger. As I told you, I liked your face when I saw you leaving that pawnshop. That was the first thing. Therefore, I knew that if you could

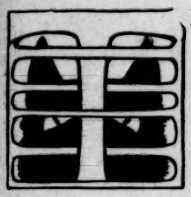
go through this farce—take that leap with that beastly umbrella—that you'd be, beyond doubt, exactly the person I was looking for. Man, you are—you decidedly are! I watched you closely and I want to say that you're one of the nerviest men I've known—and I've known a few. And now, if you'll pardon my little ruse, I want you to come along with me—don't worry about the salary, for I assure you it will be quite satisfactory! Well—what do you say?"

Tommy Derrick blinked thoughtfully. "So you're Halstone, eh?—Dare-devil Halstone! Well—I'll—be—" He paused a moment; and then his pleasant, infective grin spread over his entire face. "What do I say—*what do I say?* Does a fish live in the water? Does a bird fly in the air? Does—*I'm there with bells on!*"

The Little Man in Black

BY ROBERT McBLAIR

"The Mills of the Gods grind slowly," and the revenge of man in ingenious and deadly, particularly when prompted by a soul-shattering experience described in this dramatic and thrilling story.



HE branches rustled a little as he pushed them aside to peer through, but the sleeping woman did not stir. The noonday sun dappled her body as she lay on the grass, a book at her side, her face in her arms. A patch of it whitened the small bit of skin that showed between the hair coiled on her neck and the linen collar of her dark blue gown.

He looked cautiously around. There were no people in this green corner of the grounds, and only a single window on the top floor of the three-story summer hotel peeped over the elm trees in between.

He made sure that the hypodermic needle was held firmly in his fingers. Even at this late moment he paused; but the memory of a terrible wrong arose within him as he looked on the prostrate woman. To him she was, beneath a pleasing exterior, the embodiment of all that is loathsome. Spurred beyond all doubt, he let himself noiselessly through the branches.

In the center of that bit of white skin, just at the top of the spine, there was a little pink discoloration, the size of the lead in a pencil. He chose this spot, and with a strong hand pressed the needle, with its load of poison, home. It did its work. Not even a quiver ran over the stricken form.

With his thumb nail he smoothed down the slight mound that ahd risen. He drew out a bit of white cloth, but as no blood had come, he returned this to his pocket, and glancing furtively around, crept back into the bushes.

Once on the other side of the fifty feet of thick growth, he straightened, brushed his clothes carefully with his hands, entered the path that was near and proceeded through the grounds until a turn brought him to a woman seated on a bench.

She arose as he came up. She was tall, though not so tall as he, and modishly dressed in a black-and-white checked suit and black hat with a trailing purple feather. Her face and carriage were distinguished, but sadness was what one remembered about her, though whether it came from the clear hazel eyes, the long olive face, or the strong set mouth, it was difficult to determine.

"Well?" she said.

He licked his dry lips. "It is done," said he. He looked down at his hands, and though they seemed to be white and clean, wiped them roughly on his handkerchief with something of a shudder.

"Oh!" she cried softly, clinching

her hands. Then she caught him by the arm. "What shall we do? Let's leave to-night, John!" she pleaded.

"No," he said, "we'll do just as we planned. To leave would draw suspicion if they discover the puncture. I don't believe they will. It left no mark."

His face was a little pale. He was a tall man, nearing middle age, with lightish hair and the wide blue eyes of a dreamer; not of an athletic figure, but robust, and well-groomed in his dark sack suit.

"Let's go to our rooms," she said. "If anyone saw us now they'd be sure to notice us. We look frightened to death."

They did not see a man turn over on to his hands from behind a great tree near-by and peer cautiously at them until they turned a curve in the stone-flagged walk leading to the hotel. He had a mask-like face and keen eyes, heavy black hair, and a dark moustache, trimmed square with his lips.

As they disappeared, he arose, a magazine in his hand, and pushed his way into the bushes in the direction from which John had come.

John slipped his arm through hers to comfort her, and perhaps to comfort himself. They walked along the rose-bordered path in silence, thinking together (as married folk sometimes will) of the inappositeness of their deed in this air of balmy, drowsy, summer peace.

"We must not talk," he whispered. As he stood aside at the door of the hotel for her to pass, they were confronted by the little man in black, whom they had remarked several times, but during their two weeks' stay had never met.

The little man removed his black fedora hat in a wide sweep, and with heels set together, made a very low bow, bending from the hips until all of the shiny back of his coat was visible.

"Ah! Mr. and Mrs. Wallace! I bid you a very good morning—a very good morning!". He seemed to be bubbling over with an enthusiasm that caused his little grey beard and moustache to bristle; but he spoke in a low tone. "Is it not beautiful, this day of God's? The roses, the warmth, the yellow sun—all the hundreds of little living things? It is a day when we realize the value of life, *n'est-ce pas?* and the pain of its loss!" He peered up at John through his huge horn-rimmed spectacles. "And the women! They, too, are lovely to-day, are they not? Some of them, you would say! Ah!" (laughing) "no doubt. Some of them! No doubt." And he went past them into the garden, laughing in a cackle, and switching at the grass with his ebony cane.

They stood looking at each other for a moment, very pale. Then John took her arm, and they went out of the sunlight into the shaded corridor and up the green carpeted stairs to their rooms.

"Oh, John," she cried, "does he know? Does he know?"

"I can't tell, dear. It is certainly very strange, never to have spoken before and then to speak as he did. Let me think. Once, when we had just arrived and I was spying on that Vallon woman, learning

her habits, I stumbled across this man. He was in the shrubbery, too, and when he saw me, he scuttled away like a rat."

"But if he had seen it, he would not have put us on our guard like that. Do you think so?"

"One would hardly think so."

"Oh, John! Please let's leave right away! I'm sure he knows. I could tell by his manner."

He had to force his habitual manner of comforting command this time. "Now, don't lose your head, Virginia, for heaven's sake! There's no train before seven tonight. I tell you what we'll do. It is now one o'clock. We'll go down at two for dinner. They'll be sure to find it out before supper, and after that we'll take the seven o'clock train. I'll tell the manager we don't care to stay after—after this has happened. That will be a good excuse.

"And listen, dearest," he said, putting his arms around her, "if the worst happens, remember you had nothing to do with this, and knew nothing about it. It is my work and I will take the blame. There is no need that both of us should suffer."

She pushed him away a little and beat him on the chest with her hands. "How dare you!" she cried fiercely, "how dare you propose that to me? You know it was my plan. You would never have done it alone." Then, still disguising her tenderness with vehemence: "If you go, I go. Remember that!"

John knew that it was useless to argue. Essentially feminine and dependent as she might be in the smaller fears and opinions, in the cause of her great affections, she harbored an iron will that hardened at opposition.

They descended to dinner, not to eat, but for the sake of appearance. Fear was raveling their nerves and undermining their composure. They sat in silence, not daring to talk of what they thought, not able to think of lighter things. The very waiter at their elbows was a menace, alive to the meaning of a covert phrase, aware of their silence and the untouched food.

Presently, as the fat head waiter was passing, John asked him about the little man in black.

"I can't remember his name, Mr. Wallace. It is hard to say: a Russian name, I believe. He came just before you and Mrs. Wallace, and warn't satisfied without he had a room overlooking the ocean and all of the hotel grounds. We had to move him to the southeast corner of the third floor. It is him that you hear playing the violin up there of an evening."

The amiable waiter finally backed away.

"Was that the room?" asked Virginia.

"Yes. It was the only window that looked down on where she lay."

"Then he *must* have seen!"

"I can't make him out. It is possible that his window was so far away he couldn't see exactly what took place. This would explain his remarks about women."

"Then, when the body is found, he will remember seeing you there."

"Yes! By Jove! We can't afford to play the innocent. We'll have to leave quick—get a motor and cut across country. Come."

They were about to rise, when a man just entering the dining room, crossed to their table. He had a mask-like face, keen eyes, heavy black hair, and a dark moustache trimmed square with his lips. His thick build and decision of manner gave an unmistakable impression of force.

He leaned with his hands on the table, and spoke confidently but courteously. "Mr. and Mrs. Wallace, I believe. My name is Griggs. I am sorry to bother you, but a guest of the hotel, Mrs. Vallon, has been found dead in a corner of the grounds. The coroner has decided to hold an inquest this afternoon in the garden and all of the guests are asked to be present, as they may be needed as witnesses. As I said, I am sorry to bother you, but the coroner insists upon it. It is just a legal formality and will not take very long. All of us will meet by the Cliff House at four o'clock."

"Why, yes; we'll be there," said John. "This is quite a shock. There were no signs of violence, or anything like that, I suppose?"

"Oh, no. No signs of violence," said Mr. Griggs, and nodding and smiling, he bowed, and betook himself to the other occupied tables. As the season had barely commenced, the guests were merely a handful.

Virginia and John looked at each other. The earth was crumbling beneath them. It seemed impossible that their feelings could not be seen in their faces. Yet the waiter was as obsequious as ever, and Mr. Griggs's manner had held nothing but apologetic respect.

"There's nothing to do now but brave it out," said John. "Let's go upstairs where we can talk."

In their room, Virginia was in almost a frenzy of nerves. "Oh, John! I know we'll be caught! I know it! I know it!"

He turned from the window, where he had been gazing on the Cliff House, just discernible through a rift in the trees.

"Yes," he said, "but even if we are hanged, it is worth it. However, I don't believe we would be. If I told this whole story to a jury, do you think any man on it would vote against us for killing such a serpent? Suppose I recited my meeting with Eleanor for the first time after she went away to school? Suppose I told where I found our only child, and how she was dressed, and how long she had been there, and how she was painted—and what she said to me, her father! Would any man be dog enough to hang us after that?" Sweat stood on his forehead from convulsion of feeling. Virginia was greatly calmed; upheld, as before the deed, by memory of the past.

Presently she said: "To think that a woman could have so little heart, to make a living by such means."

"She was not a woman, I tell you," said John; "she was a *viper!*"

"And she was really beautiful, too. I wonder if she ever loved? She couldn't have!"

"I heard that there was a man who generally traveled with her. They would come together at a place like this, apparently meeting for the first time, and lure some rich fool into a card game, or into buying some worthless stock."

"But I am not interested in her, except that finally she is where she belongs, and we can go back, not at peace so long as Eleanor lives, but knowing, at least, that this creature's career is stopped, and that she will never again do to other parents what she has done to us."

At four o'clock they went down; Virginia wearing a heavy veil, John affecting composure. Reaching the Cliff House, they found that the other guests had arrived. There was the polished Mr. Blatchley, affable and faultlessly dressed, clean shaven and handsome, who was staying at the hotel until some wealthy friends called for him on their motoring trip. There was stout Mrs. Weatherby, in brilliant purple silk, who, not having a nurse, had left her six months' old baby with the bell hop. She seemed to be enjoying her freedom. There was the elderly English couple, bristling with reserve; the old gentleman immaculate, with spats and a white moustache, his lady with her stiffly corseted figure and puffed hips and sleeves. And there were Mr. and Mrs. Byrd, from Charleston, who "couldn't get used to having the mountains and the sea together." Finally, there was the little man in black, standing over by the English couple, leaning on his cane and gazing out to sea, seemingly absorbed in the view.

"If this place was chosen as a trap for the guilty, it was well picked," thought John. Towards the ocean, on the east, there was a sheer drop of seventy-five or a hundred feet to the rocky beach below. Southward, was a steep slope, almost as precipitous. On the west was the high stone wall of the hotel grounds, and behind them, toward the hotel, was the little Cliff House and the white marble benches that even now were being filled by the jurymen, carelessly clothed natives, diverse in their occupations, but one in their curiosity.

Mr. Griggs appeared with them, and although not of the jury, he seemed the moving spirit. The coroner, a round and easy-going grocer, had been impressed, somehow, by Griggs, and looked to him before each move.

John and Virginia, with the other guests, were over against the wall. The line of jurymen, sitting at right angles, stretched toward the sea. Griggs walked out to the center of the square thus formed and addressed the gathering.

"The coroner, in carrying out so efficiently his very important office, has called this inquest here and asked all of us to be present. I regret to say that there are circumstances surrounding the death of Mrs. Vallon that require investigation."

Virginia gripped John's arm with both her hands. Mrs. Weatherby stopped her very audible whispering. Everyone sat up; that is, everyone except the little man in black. He still gazed dreamily out over the ocean.

"For this reason," Griggs continued, "the sheriff and several deputies also, have been asked to attend.

"I may say, to begin with, that it was I who found Mrs. Vallon's body to-day, at noon, and although I arrived as a guest of the hotel only this morning, I may be able to throw a great deal of light on how her death

came about. Let me first say that she did not die a natural death. She was murdered!"

John and Virginia were very pale and every muscle tense. Fortunately, they were not observed by the listeners, and Griggs was avoiding them with his eyes.

"She was not only murdered, but she was murdered in a very cunning and skilful way—in a manner that showed the coldest calculation and no little intelligence on the part of her assassin."

The little man in black had been gazing out upon the changing colors of the sea and the sky of unbelievable blue, with its fluff of snowy cloud, but at these words he walked out into the open space and held up his hand for silence.

"I, too," he said in his soft voice, "can throw some light on this tragedy. The gentleman, Mr. Griggs, has used the word 'assassin,' and it interests me strangely. If you will bear with me but for a moment, I think you will understand."

He looked slowly over the group till his eyes found Virginia and John. Then he continued:

"Twenty years ago to-day, my wife gave birth to a child, then died; and all my life was bound up in Alice, the little girl that she left behind. Eighteen years later, this little girl went away to school. I taught the violin and saved every cent for years in order to give her an education."

He paused at this point, and seemed to be feeling great emotion. Controlling himself, he went on:

"After she had been away six or eight months, I received this letter." He held up a paper. "I will not read it to you now; perhaps you will see it later. Suffice it to say, that a man had made love to her, betrayed her, and then would have sold her into slavery. He did not do it, because she preferred to die. This letter was her farewell to me."

The tears were coursing down his cheeks and his face was working spasmodically.

"That man had a confederate—a woman. That woman called herself Mrs. Vallon. This morning, at ten o'clock, I killed that woman. I killed her while she slept, by pushing a needle into the back of her neck. It was poisoned, but would have left no mark except, perhaps, a little pink discoloration, the size of the lead in a pencil."

The little man paused. No one stirred or spoke. A locust in a nearby shrub chirred shrilly in the stillness. Griggs cleared his throat. Virginia and John were shot through with doubt and wonder—not yet free of fear.

In a moment, the sheriff, a lean man sitting next to the coroner, got to his feet. Nearly all of the jurors did likewise. The little man held up his hand, and there was something strangely imperative in his small bespectacled dignity.

"I have been hunting for this man and woman for two years," he said. "To-day my opportunity came. I killed the woman. Now I shall *kill the man!*"

At this, with a wild look, he rushed at Griggs, and seizing him by the waist, reeled to the edge of the cliff.

But Griggs must have expected some attack, for he held ready a wicked knife. He sank this deep into the little man's back. Whether the fingers of the little man were locked could not be seen, but though he grew very limp, his hold merely fell to the other's knees, and it was in this wise, tangled with the little man in black, and clutching at the air with a terrible cry, that Griggs went backward over the edge.

He turned to his wife, the tender, the affectionate, the brown Venus, the faithful unto death.

"Nothing—nothing," he answered.

"Write the message, señor," growled the voice of Beltran Angga, whom Dunwoody had, for the time being, forgotten.

Dunwoody turned his wide eyes once more upon the floating flag below. Then he shut his teeth together so tightly that the muscles of his jaws stood out plainly on his cheeks, sat himself down, took from his pocket a notebook, and scrawled the message to Major Lipsworthy. When he had finished it, he folded it twice and gave it into the hands of Andrea.

"Steal down to the left," he said, "and enter the town from the south. Goodbye, *carissima*—wait, kiss me!"

Andrea kissed him quickly, fondly, and went.

When she had gone half an hour, Dunwoody and Beltran Angga saw six hundred Americans, one third of them black, march to the southward at a double-quick. Angga clapped a hand on the mountaineer's shoulder.

"'*Sta bien!*" he exulted. "Now, let us go back to our forces and lead them into San Fernando."

Dunwoody glanced toward the ever ready automatic pistol; then he hastened with the insurgent officer at his heels, back to the waiting Filipinos.

The horde began to move, with Dunwoody and Angga at its head, toward the gap. Dunwoody had them close up from the rear, until they were marching fifty deep—and without any semblance of order. They went silently, as stealthily as a cloud in the night, stooping low in the grass. When the advance portion was almost through the pass, a great bass voice bellowed from the right hillside:

"Surrender!"

The insurgents stopped and sank to their knees, their rifles and bolos ready. Lined along the two hillsides were the six hundred Americans—the Filipinos were completely bottled up, beautifully trapped, without any hope of escape!

"*Traidor!*" screamed Beltran Angga, and turned, his face devilish, upon the mountaineer Dunwoody.

The two fired at the same time. Dunwoody saw the insurgent officer drop his pistol, seize his clothing over his heart, and sink, ashen and limp, to the ground.

Dunwoody then fell himself. Dazedly he knew that the brown men about him were laying down their arms; dimly he heard their mutterings of chagrin; then he closed his eyes to the streaming white light of the sun, and all became dark to him.

Dunwoody had not written to Major Lipsworthy the message he had intended to write. The sight of Old Glory had caused him to make a change in his plans.

The best of the old Spanish Government buildings in San Fernando de la Union was used as a hospital. It was surrounded by ylang-ylangs and palms, and flowering vines ran in riot about its cool and spacious balconies. Inside this building, on a little white bed close beside an open window, lay the mountaineer Dunwoody; and about him stood Major Lipsworthy, two grave-faced doctors

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 52]

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and a nurse, and Captain Blair.

It was at sundown. Dunwoody opened his eyes and stared blankly upward. Slowly the light of reason came and he muttered feebly:

"You got 'em all?"

"Without a shot—there were no shots fired except by you and Beltran Angga," answered Major Lipsworthy. "You killed Angga, Dunwoody."

Then the major knelt beside the bed. He took from his pocket a blood-stained yellow document with a bullet hole in it and held it up before the mountaineer's face. Dunwoody saw that the bullet that had pierced his left breast *had cut away almost entirely the first three letters of the terrible word "Dishonorably"!*

"Does that mean anything?" whispered the mountaineer.

"Everything!" said the major, in a voice that seemed strangely altered.

"Honorably discharged," muttered Dunwoody. His black eyes shone with the light of delirium. He stretched his quivering hands toward the major. "Help me—to set up—quick—"

They put pillows to his shoulders and he smiled. His left hand fell to his side. He raised his right to his forehead, and stared half upward, as though at something the others might not see.

"I s'lute You," he muttered, gasping—"Death, God, Eternity—I sa—lute—"

He fell back. Major Lipsworthy turned away blindly. The doctors covered the lifeless figure with a white cloth.

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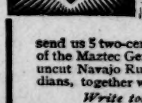

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wasn't at all concerned about the dispatches, but he had another destination in mind for himself and his friend. He waited till the other was near enough, then he slid the revolver out of his companion's unresisting fingers, took careful aim, and fired. The man crumpled up in a heap as his machine sped by, and Wayne gazed ahead again.

The American camp was now plainly to be seen, though it was still some distance away. A tiny flag fluttered from the mast of the "wireless." Fine, thread-like antennæ fanned out on either side. On the ground beneath it were a number of fighting 'planes, like moths pinned to a card; and behind it a single line of tracks followed the coast to the south. There were no tents, no horses, no heavy artillery. A circle of machine guns, spaced well apart, defended the camp; and three armored trains, on sidings, served as shelter for the men. Wayne took in all these details at a glance, then turned and gazed anxiously at his friend. Archie had fainted, he discovered. Then another bullet whistled past his ear and he knew that the chase had been resumed.

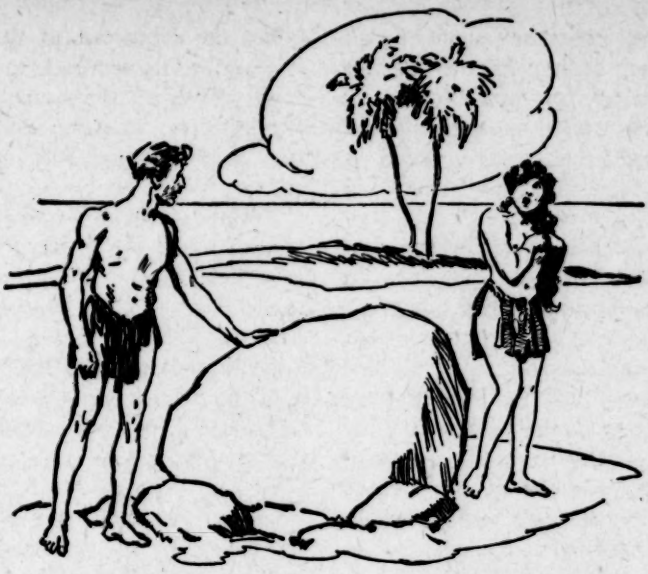
The indicator on the gauge warned him that his gasoline was running out and he wondered if he would be able to rise high enough to volplane to the camp. More shots flew past his ears. His three pursuers were crowding him uncomfortably close and his thoughts turned longingly to the stack of rifles on board the Narcissus. "I'd like to show them how a white man can shoot," he muttered, savagely. Then a tongue of flame licked out from one of the guns below and he looked back to see its effect. Two of the aeroplanes were curving away to right and left, while the third plunged headlong to the sea.

Wayne lifted his machine still higher, while the enemy circled back upon his trail. Bullets sang about him again. Little holes began to appear in the planes and one of the stays was shot away; but the wicked-looking ring of guns below kept the Mexicans from approaching nearer. He would carry Archie to the camp yet, he ventured to hope. The levers in his hands ceased to vibrate as he used up the last remaining drop or "gas," and a minute later he experienced a slight sensation of coolness in the back of the neck.

It was nothing, he said to himself, as the machine started on its long descent. A splinter from one of the rudders had scratched him, he supposed, and after he landed he would have the cut bound up. Everything in the camp was visible now. The armored trains were veritable fortresses on wheels. There were searchlights on pylons to guard against night attacks from the sky, and even the aeroplanes were cased in steel. While he looked down, one of them began buzzing and crawling over the ground, then darted suddenly aloft. Wayne watched it, then glanced again at Archie. His eyes were open now in a fixed stare.

The machine slid earthward with accelerating speed, and Wayne gazed abstractedly at the camp. "Hell!" he cried, aloud, "why couldn't I have

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 56]



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been killed instead of Archie? Mary would have shed a tear or two, perhaps, when she heard the news, but she would have married Archie in the end. Hell!" he repeated, and leaned back in his seat to rest. It felt good to lay back. It felt good to know that the machine could steer and balance itself. "Poor Archie!" he sighed, and was vaguely conscious of something trickling down his back.

There was a vacant piece of ground in front of the "wireless" and the machine headed toward it as if piloted by unseen hands. Now he was soaring above the machine guns. The gunners looked queerly foreshortened, as they waved their caps at him, and the camp was bigger than he had supposed. The trains and 'planes were spaced wide apart, as well as the guns, he perceived, and steam was up in all the locomotives. Then he caught sight of a group of officers standing beside the "wireless," and the next minute the flyer grounded in soft soil.

Tender hands lifted his dead friend out of the machine. Others, just as tender, removed the dispatch-bag from about his waist. Its contents were scanned. One document was handed to the man at the "wireless." The group of officers dispersed, and immediately, pandemonium seemed to have broken loose in the camp. The "wireless" operator commenced hammering a message into the void. Engineers climbed into the cabs of their locomotives. Gunners dragged their machine-guns toward the trains. Electricians dismounted the searchlights. Aviators tuned up their machines. A pilot engine shot off down the track and was lost to view.

The young millionaire fell to musing as he lay back in his seat and watched this sudden outburst of activity. There was no rushing, no confusion, yet the camp was literally melting away before his eyes. One of the armored trains pulled out, escorted by a covey of fighting monoplanes. Three of the pylons were down and the electricians were swarming about the fourth. Then it dawned upon him slowly, that two men in khaki were standing beside him and he heard one of them say:

"Yes, sir. A bullet-wound in the back of the neck. Severed an artery. He can live but a few minutes."

Wayne wondered whom the men in uniform could be talking about. Some poor devil had stopped a Mexican bullet, he supposed; but just then another train pulled out, accompanied by another detachment of flyers, and the matter faded completely from his mind. The last pylon was down, he observed. All the guns had been put aboard the trains. Now the electricians were disconecting the "wireless"; and as the flag fluttered earthward, feelings that he had never experienced before, surged in his breast. It was his flag, he meditated proudly, as he watched it descend. His father and his father's father had carried it to victory again and again. The Waynes had always fought in its defense. And summing up his last ounce of strength, as he gazed at its starry folds, he raised his hand slowly and stiffly to his hat in a military salute.

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official turned and gravely handed me a nickle.

What else could I do but accept it? I found myself now to be only a poor human atom to whom no course was left but to take matters as I found them. No doubt, Caruthers would explain everything.

The ride downtown was itself uneventful. My heart rose continually in my mouth lest we meet with a collision, since the mortorman stood upon, what was for us, the rear platform, and carefully studied the stretch of track which we had already passed over.

At Madison and South State Streets I dismounted. The clock on the Marshall Field building showed the time to be a quarter of four.

For a moment, I paused to peer in the windows of the basement pressrooms of the "Chicago Evening Vulcan." Imagine my surprise to see thousands of newspapers, that were neatly stacked in bundles, being fed into the folding machines, passing through the presses, and coming subsequently out in the form of rolls of clean white paper which were instantly carted back to the storerooms.

I hurried to the club. I felt certain that I would find Caruthers in the card room playing his inevitable game of poker—and I was not disappointed. He was seated at a square table with three others whom I knew slightly and he nodded absent mindedly to me as I stood looking on.

He had a great pile of unstacked chips in front of him. Just as I arrived on the scene he shoved them forth to the center of the table. "Gentlemen," he grunted, "in a friendly game such as ours, I could never prolong the betting when I hold an invincible hand. I have here that rare bird, the Royal Flush. The pot is mine."

Blakely, to his right, never blinked an eye at such extraordinary news. "I call Whitson," he said, and forthwith proceeded to abstract ten red chips from the pile in the center.

Whitson, to the right of Blakely, leaned forward and he, too, removed ten red chips from the rapidly decreasing heap, remarking quietly, "I call Barberry's ten."

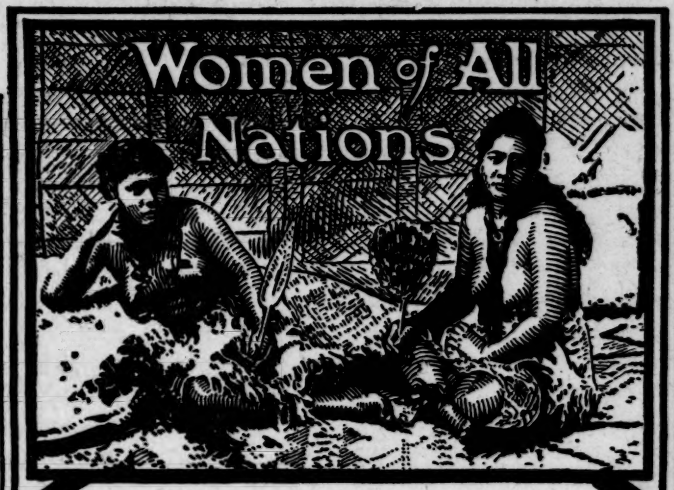
Barberry, at Whitson's right, drew out the remaining ten colored disks, which left but a few scattered white ones in the center of the table. "I'm betting ten reds," he stated, "on the hypothetical strength of three big aces."

Whereupon I fled precipitately.

Could it be possible, I thought, that I was losing my reason? My watch now showed the time to be only five minutes past three. It was very warm. Perhaps the heat had been affecting me. A brief sojourn among the cooling breezes out at the South Shore bathing beach would undoubtedly restore me to my natural self again. Perhaps a cold plunge in the lake would help to right matters.

The beach was crowded. Numberless bathers slipped from the tiny dressing rooms at the rear of the beach and made their way backward into the waves. But the most remarkable thing—they were dripping wet before they entered the water. Those who emerged from the lake, particularly

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 60]



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the women, did so very gingerly, an inch at a time, sending up shriek after shriek—but as they reached the sands they were perfectly dry.

With despair in my heart and curses against the glass of green liquid that I had so foolishly imbibed, I left the beach without taking a plunge. I was beginning to realize that things were really as they seemed. I saw now, when it was too late, that I had precipitated an extremely unfortunate state of affairs either for myself or for the world in which I had lived, by meddling with something that had not concerned me.

By noon time I was seated on a bench in Grant Park, wondering how to adjust myself to these conditions.

For nearly five long hours I sat there. My ruminations came to nothing. The sun crept closer and closer to the eastern rim of Lake Michigan and, when the factory whistles blew the announcement that the hour of 7 A.M. was at hand, I realized with a start that there was nothing I could do but return to my rooms and make the best of things as they now were.

Fumbling in my clothes, I found the stub of a cigar. I remembered knocking its ashes off yesterday and slipping it into my vest pocket for future use—a reprehensible habit, to be sure. Lighting it, I gloomily puffed away at it. The more I puffed the longer it grew. When, of its own accord, it finally went out, I examined it. My fingers held a perfect Havana. So I flung it bitterly away, knowing now that in this topsy-turvy world, as a complete cigar it had entirely lost its utility.

I did not search for a car to take me home. I walked slowly along North State Street toward my rooms. The streets became more deserted until, finally, only a few nocturnal fishermen, lugging heavy strings of fish, could be seen making their way backward to the lake.

As I marched along, my hands thrust deep in my pockets, I saw window-shade after window-shade in different houses, suddenly drawn down. Immediately after the lowering of each one, an alarm clock would strike sharply—then all would be silent.

Last night had returned.

Noiselessly, I let myself into my boarding house. I reached my room and, in the gray light that usually precedes the dawn, flung myself in the easy chair and dozed off.

When I awoke I had a headache such as I never hope to have again. My throat was parched and dry, giving me a thirst that seemed infinite in magnitude. Rising to my feet, I lighted the gas and peered at my watch. Its hands were both touching the XII. Then I gazed in the direction of my dresser.

The green flask stood where I had left it, but the breeze from the window had whipped the tag over. From where I stood I could read:

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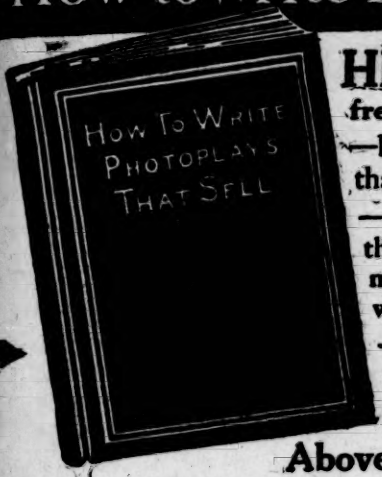

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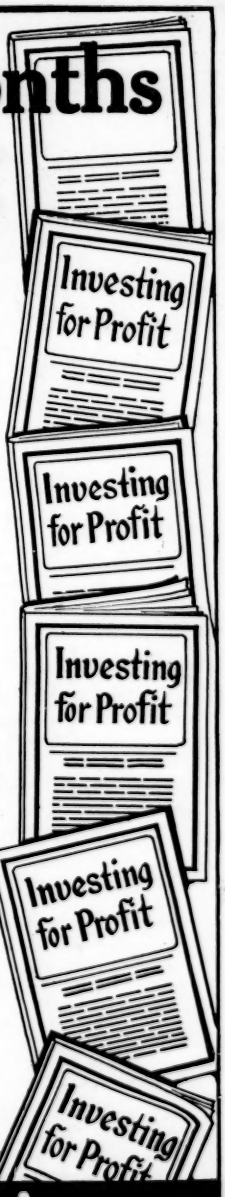

This wonderful magazine is the "Investor's Brain Partner" and often referred to as the "Little Schoolmaster of the SCIENCE OF INVESTMENT"

Don't invest a dollar anywhere until you at least read Investing for Profit Magazine

"Every investment he touches turns into money." This is a common everyday expression — no doubt you know a few such men among your acquaintances. These men do not follow blind luck — they have mastered the law of financial Success. You may watch them conceive and carry out their financial plans successfully — and you know they are not mentally stronger than you are. But it is the KNOW HOW in conjunction with brains that count.

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